

---

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
AT 40-42 WISBECH ROAD,  
LITTLEPORT,  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
(LIWR 09)**

---

Work Undertaken For  
**Lindum Sturgeon**

December 2009

Report Compiled by  
Andrew Failes BA (Hons) MA

Planning Application No: 09/0036/FUM  
Accession No: ECB 3287  
National Grid Reference: TL 5649 8718  
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-69296

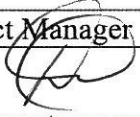
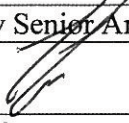
APS Report No. **129/09**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**



**Quality Control**  
**40-42 Wisbech Road,**  
**Littleport, Cambridgeshire**  
**(LIWR 09)**

Project Coordinator	Dale Trimble
Supervisor	Andrew Failes
Site Staff	Chris Moulis, Ross Kendall
Illustration	Andrew Failes
Photographic Reproduction	Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst	Andrew Failes

Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
Dale Trimble 	 Tom Lane
Date: 18/11/2010	Date: 16-11-2010

## CONTENTS

List of Figures

List of Plates

<b>1.</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2.1</b>	<b>DEFINITION OF AN EVALUATION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2.2</b>	<b>PLANNING BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.3</b>	<b>TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>2.4</b>	<b>PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>3.</b>	<b>AIMS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>METHODS</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>5.</b>	<b>RESULTS</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>6.</b>	<b>DISCUSSION</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>7.</b>	<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>8.</b>	<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>9.</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>10.</b>	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>11.</b>	<b>ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>15</b>

### Appendices

1	Specification for Archaeological Evaluation
2	Context Descriptions
3	The Finds
4	The Environmental Data
5	Glossary
6	The Archive

### **List of Figures**

- Figure 1 General location plan
- Figure 2 Site location plan
- Figure 3 Trench locations
- Figure 4 Trenches 1 and 2
- Figure 5 Trenches 4 and 5
- Figure 6 Trenches 3, 6 and 7
- Figure 7 Sections 1-3
- Figure 8 Sections 4-6
- Figure 9 Section 7
- Figure 10 Sections 8-12
- Figure 11 Sections 13-15

### **List of Plates**

- Plate 1 Trench 1
- Plate 2 Trench 2, Section 12
- Plate 3 Trench 3, Section 3
- Plate 4 Trench 4, Section 14
- Plate 5 Trench 6
- Plate 6 Trench 6, Section 4
- Plate 7 Trench 6, Section 6
- Plate 8 Trench 7, Section 7
- Plate 9 Trench 7, Pit [275]



## 1. SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at 40-42 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site.

The site lies in an area of archaeological significance in close proximity to remains of Iron Age settlement and adjacent to a Roman site of some importance with occupation dating from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. This (possible villa) settlement had at least 8 successive phases of occupation beginning and ending with large enclosure and drainage ditches. Roman field systems have been identified in the field to the north of the site, while further to the north, Roman salt-making sites are clustered along the roddon of the Old Croft River.

The evaluation identified evidence for a body of water at the northern end of the site and a scatter of burnt stone near the waters' edge, including burnt flint and river pebbles. It is argued that this deposit may represent a 'burnt mound' site and is therefore likely to be Bronze Age in date. A small assemblage of animal bone, charcoal, a little fired earth and some small flakes of unburnt flint (probably debitage) were revealed during environmental analysis of this deposit.

An ovoid feature close to the burnt stone deposit contained a small amount of fire debris and may be associated with activity at the possible burnt mound. A pit to the west of the possible burnt mound predates the other features on site but contained no artefacts, while a probable post-medieval ditch was identified in the north-eastern part of the site.

The sequence of deposits observed in

*Trenches 1-5 at the northern and north-eastern end of the site illustrate how the environment changed over time. An alluvial and shelly alluvial deposit signified a body of slow moving or standing water. Burnt mound sites are always situated on the edge of a body of water, so it is probable that these wet conditions prevailed during the Bronze Age. The shelly alluvium was overlain by a peat deposit, signalling a change to freshwater reed swamp conditions. Another layer of alluvium probably represents a flooding episode or inundation. When this had dried out a probable post-medieval ditch was cut through it. Over this is a layer of former topsoil buried by made up ground associated with the former garage and petrol station at the site.*

A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered during the investigation along with 17 fragments of fired clay, a piece of burnt stone and a freshwater mollusc shell. Samples taken from a deposit containing quantities of burnt flint and pebbles were sent for environmental analysis.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of an Evaluation

An archaeological evaluation is defined as 'a limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If such archaeological remains are present Field Evaluation defines their character and extent, quality and preservation, and it enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate' (IFA 1999).

## 2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Lindum Sturgeon to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation in advance of proposed development at 40-42 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire as detailed in Planning Application 09/0036/FUM. The evaluation was undertaken on the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2009 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services (Appendix 1) and approved by the senior archaeologist at Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning & Countryside Advice.

## 2.3 Topography and Geology

Littleport lies 8km northeast of Ely and 30km north of Cambridge in northeastern Cambridgeshire (Fig 1). The proposed development is situated on the west side of Littleport, on Wisbech Road approximately 0.35 km from the centre of the village as defined by the parish church. The application area occupies a roughly rectangular plot of approximately 6480m<sup>2</sup>, located on the north side of the road at numbers 40-42.

At present the site is unused and the location of a former petrol station and garage. Land slopes noticeably from south to north. Between the southern and northern end of the site the difference in elevation is approximately 1.87metres, descending from around 5.20m OD to 3.33m OD.

The site lies in the Cambridgeshire fenland, situated on the northwest edge of the hill occupied by the village of Littleport. The underlying geology is Till over Kimmeridge Clay. Soils of the area are Ashley Association clayey stagnogleyic argillic brown earths.

## 2.4 Palaeoenvironmental and Archaeological Setting

The Fenland has long been recognised as an important archaeological landscape, containing superimposed evidence of settlement, ritual and agricultural remains dating from the prehistoric period onwards. Littleport occupies an island of boulder clays capped with glacial sand and gravel protruding through fen deposits. The course of the Old Croft River, formerly the main channel which drained the water of the fen basin in this area, lies on the northern side of the island.

The main island comprises an area of around 400 hectares and rises to around 20m OD. The remainder of the parish lies in fen ground apart from two smaller islands at Apes Hall and Butchers Hill.

Excavations at Peacocks Farm in the southeast of the parish provided the first dating of the Fenland Flandrian deposits, and several more recent investigations have added chronological and stratigraphic detail to the sequence. Radiocarbon determinations from the Peacocks Farm site indicate that by around the middle of the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC the area was subject to rising water levels and peat was forming in the deep channels surrounding the island. Mesolithic flints recovered from the buried ground surface at Peacocks Farm and Letter F Farm, also located in the southeast of the parish on a sandy outcrop, demonstrate a human presence in the landscape prior to peat deposition (Hall 1996).

Deposits of marine alluvium seal these 'lower' peats. Radiocarbon dates from Main Drain near Peacocks Farm indicate that marine conditions prevailed by the late 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. An environment of mudflats drained by a dendritic pattern of

creeks and channels would have prevailed for much of this marine phase. Radiocarbon dates from Welney indicate a return to freshwater conditions by the Iron Age, although silty deposits on the banks of the Old Croft River demonstrate that this major channel continued to be tidal. Investigations at Redmere Farm (Collins 2007), 7km east of Littleport, also identified inter-tidal deposits which probably represent the height of the Bronze Age marine incursion event at c. 3400 years BP (Boreham 2007, 8). At this time the sea would have inundated the low lying late Neolithic/early Bronze Age landscape. It is generally considered that the duration of the inundation was at most several hundred years and as the sea retreated the area became freshwater reed swamp leading to the formation of an upper layer of peat (Boreham 2007, 8). These conditions may have persisted through the Iron Age until the commencement of land reclamation in the late medieval period.

Survey of the parish of Littleport (Hall 1996) identified a number of prehistoric and Roman sites in the area. A concentration of prehistoric finds was located at the southeast of the parish, located on small sand islands and represents the western extent of the intense activity of the period identified at Hockwold in Norfolk and Mildenhall in Suffolk. On Littleport island itself the survey recovered little in the way of prehistoric material, the only two sites identified comprising sparse scatters of prehistoric flint.

However, the Cambridgeshire HER contains several records of Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Romano-British discoveries on the island. Neolithic finds include a flint sickle recovered 600m south-east of the site (HER 07233), and a cluster of flint scatters just over a

kilometre to the west where cores, blades, scrapers and a leaf shaped arrowhead were among the recovered artefacts (HER 07191, 07192, 01793). Three ring ditches, thought to be of Bronze Age date are known approximately 1.5km to the east and are likely to represent the remains of burial mounds (HER 07196) (Lucas, 1998).

Work at Highfield Farm (Holt 2008), just over one kilometre south of Wisbech Road has uncovered evidence of prehistoric activity dating from the Neolithic to the late Iron Age. The practice of pit digging and deposition is in evidence at the site and ranges from the Neolithic to the early Iron Age. On the higher ground, a natural hollow contains prehistoric remains spanning 3000 years. A number of prehistoric features at the site contain ceramics often found in ceremonial contexts, including Peterborough Ware and Beaker pottery. This suggests that Highfield Farm was an important place in the landscape for prehistoric people and that its importance continued over a significant period of time. Field systems and domestic enclosures are in evidence from the late Bronze Age onwards, indicating pastoral and arable use of the land. There are also remains of a Roman rural settlement and an early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at the site.

Closer to the proposed development, late Iron Age remains were uncovered during excavations undertaken in January 2008 at 80 Wisbech Road (Greene 2008), approximately 400m west of the site (MCB17425) (Fig 2). These included a dense cluster of pits, post-holes, gully termini and two large field system ditches. Finds recovered from these features comprised pottery, struck flint, flint tools, animal bone and burnt stone. A waterlogged clay deposit probably

indicated a contemporary area of standing water at the north of the site.

Only two other Iron Age sites were recorded in the parish during the Fenland Survey, although evidence for intensive settlement during the period is known from Ely 8km to the south. Also, the Cambridgeshire HER contains records of possible Iron Age settlements on the south side of the island and on the northwest peninsula known as 'The Plains'. where flints of Mesolithic date are also known.

Romano-British occupation sites are recorded in close proximity to the development site. Approximately 20m north of the north-western edge of the development site, saltern debris, large quantities of Samian, colour coated and late shell gritted ware pottery have been retrieved (MCB12854) (Fig 2). Harrowing of the field to the north of the site and excavations for a house approximately 200m to the north (MCB10101) (Fig 2) have produced large amounts of pottery, as well as glass and flue tile dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century AD, illustrating that the Littleport settlement was 'fairly well Romanised' (Lucas 1998). Remains of subsequent excavation at Camel Road c. 100m east of the site (MCB14077) (Fig 2), revealed evidence of a Roman settlement of some importance with occupation dating from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century (Macauley 1999). The HER records a 'high status' (possible villa) settlement with at least 8 successive phases of occupation, beginning and ending with large enclosure and drainage ditches. The first phase of occupation (AD117-161) saw periodic flooding and extensive inundations which covered the site with alluvium. The site was re-used shortly thereafter (late 2<sup>nd</sup> century) with land use changing to proto-industrial activity marked by slots, tanks and narrow flat based vertical sided ditches. In the later 2-

3<sup>rd</sup> century the site stayed dry and a roundhouse was constructed. The final phases of activity in the mid 3<sup>rd</sup>-early 4<sup>th</sup> century saw land use change to industrial activity. This phase was short-lived and abandoned near the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century to be replaced by large rectilinear enclosure ditches, driveways and a shift to pasture (HER 10939).

Approximately 100m to the north-west of the site, a single large channel has been identified and interpreted as a Roman canal, probably associated with the Camel Road settlement just to the south (MCB15678) (Fig 2). The fill of this channel contained animal remains and pottery dating to the 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century.

A group of Roman ditches representing at least two phases of a field system has been uncovered 500m west of the development site, along with two Neolithic flints and a burnt flint (MCB18585) (Fig 2).

In addition, a number of findspots have been recorded. A bronze coin of Galleinus (43-409AD) (MCB8706) (Fig 2), was recovered 200m south-east of the site. A deposit identified 600m to the north-west contained 24 sherds of Roman pottery within c. 0.30m of topsoil. It is thought that this may have been thrown up during dredging of the Old Croft River in 1997 (MCB13004) (Fig 2). A small amount of residual Roman pottery, a spindle whorl and a few scattered flints (including an early Neolithic to late Bronze Age scraper were recovered c. 600m to the south-west off of Parsons Lane (MCB14026) (Fig 2). An evaluation here revealed a number of ditches which probably form a field system of Roman or medieval date.

Approximately. 100m northwest of the site (MCB8705) (Fig 2), there is a rectangular enclosure with one rounded corner that is

undated but may possibly represent Romano-British occupation.

The HER also contains records of plotted cropmarks in the fields just 50m to the north of 40 Wisbech Road, immediately to the north of Black Bank Drove. These are thought to be associated with Romano-British salt making and settlement.

A dense cluster of Roman salt-making sites (salterns) has been identified c.400m to the north along the roddon of the Old Croft River (MCB8759) (Fig 2). Briquetage and large quantities of Roman pottery have been recovered from these sites.

Ely monastery had acquired Littleport by the Domesday Survey in 1086 wherein the settlement was known as *Litelport*, literally meaning 'small town'. The medieval settlement may well centre on the north side of the island, adjacent to the course of the Old Croft River.

Some medieval pottery was recovered in the field to the north of the site amongst the Roman remains (MCB8760) (Fig 2) and just north of the northwest corner of the site along with Roman pottery and saltern debris (MCB12855) (Fig 2).

### 3. AIMS

The aim of the evaluation was to gather information to establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits in order to enable the Senior Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning & Countryside Advice to formulate a policy for the management of archaeological resources present on the site.

### 4. METHODS

Seven trenches, two meters wide with differing lengths, were excavated to the surface of the underlying natural geology (Fig 3). Trench 1 measured 28m in length and was connected to Trench 2 which measured 24m in length. These trenches were located in the north-eastern corner of the site. Trench 3 was located in the north-western corner of the site and had a length of 22m. Trenches 4 and 5 were also located in the north-eastern area of the site, to the south of Trench 3. These trenches were connected forming a T shape. Trench 4 was 17m long, while Trench 5 measured 20m in length. Trench 6 was 29m long and located at the westernmost edge of the site in an area that still retained topsoil and grass. The seventh trench measured 24m in length and was the most southerly trench opened during the investigation. Trenches were not excavated at the southern end of the site due to known hydrocarbon contamination.

Removal of topsoil and other overburden was undertaken by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces of the trenches were then cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains.

Each deposit exposed during the evaluation was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 2. A photographic record was also compiled and sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 respectively. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Environmental sampling was undertaken on the discretion of the site supervisor



using guidelines established by English Heritage (2002). The subsequent processing of the samples is detailed in Appendix 4.

The location of the excavated trenches was surveyed in relation to fixed points on boundaries and on existing buildings.

Following excavation, finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 3). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

## 5. RESULTS

The results of the archaeological evaluation are discussed in trench order. Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

### *Trench 1*

The earliest deposit encountered in this trench was a naturally deposited firm light blue clay mixed with soft yellowish brown sandy silt (111) (Fig 7, Sections 1 & 2) (Plate 1). The upper surface of this deposit occurred at a height of 2.0m OD.

A 0.15m thick layer of soft light grey and yellowish brown sandy silt (110) alluvium overlay natural deposit (111) (Fig 7, Sections 1 & 2) (Plate 1).

Sandy silt (110) was sealed by a 0.20m thick, soft light grey, alluvial sandy silt (109), with frequent mollusc shell fragments (Fig 7, Sections 1 & 2) (Plate 1). A sample from this deposit was taken for analysis (Rackham, Appendix 4) and found to contain a variety of freshwater molluscs which indicated an environment of slow moving or standing water.

A 0.19m thick organic layer of soft dark brown to greyish brown peaty silt (108) had formed above deposit (109) (Fig 7, Sections 1 & 2) (Plate 1) signalling a change to a freshwater reed swamp environment..

The peaty silt was overlain by firm light olive brown alluvial clay (107), 0.24m thick (Fig 7, Sections 1 & 2) (Plate 1).

Deposit (107) was cut by a 2.80m wide, roughly east-west oriented, linear feature [106], with a depth of 0.78m and slightly convex sides breaking fairly sharply to a flat base (Fig 7, Section 1). This feature was filled with soft, dark brownish grey clayey silt (105) and firm, dark brown clayey silt (104), with occasional lighter brown patches. A fragment of white pottery was observed in one of these fills during machining.

This feature was sealed by a 0.25m thick buried topsoil consisting of firm, dark greyish brown clayey silt (103) (Fig 7, Sections 1 & 2) (Plate 1).

A 0.28m thick layer of modern rubble and debris (102) overlay deposit (103). A 50mm hard mid grey surface of stone chippings (101) was laid over rubble deposit (102) (Fig 7, Section 1 & 2) (Plate 1).

### *Trench 2*

The deposit recorded in the base of Trench 2 consisted of light orangey brown silt (209), which was overlain by a 0.10m thick, firm light grey silty clay (208) with red and light yellowish brown patches (Figure 10, Section 12) (Plate 2). The upper surface of this natural deposit (208) occurred at a height of 2.28m OD.

A 0.10m thick layer of firm, light bluish grey, alluvial silty clay (208) with some



light yellowish brown patches overlay deposit (209) (Fig 10, Section 12) (Plate 2).

A 70mm thick, soft, light whitish greyish brown deposit of silt (207) was formed over deposit (208) (Fig 10, Section 12) (Plate 2).

The thin silt deposit (207) was sealed by a 0.18m thick, soft, mid grey alluvial silt (206) containing very frequent mollusc shells (Fig 10, Section 12) (Plate 2). This was the same shelly alluvium recorded and sampled in Trench 1.

The shelly silt deposit was also overlain by a soft, dark brown organic silt and peat deposit (205) that was 0.12m thick (Fig 10, Section 12) (Plate 2).

A 0.18m thick, firm, light grey alluvial clay (204) with some reddish patches overlay organic deposit (205) (Fig 10, Section 12) (Plate 2).

A former topsoil deposit of firm dark greyish brown clayey silt (203), 0.18m thick, sealed the grey clay alluvium (205) (Fig 10, Section 12) (Plate 2).

A deposit of modern rubble (202), approximately 0.22m thick, overlay silt deposit (203) and was itself overlain by a thin, 80mm, surface deposit of stone chippings (Fig 10, Section 12) (Plate 2).

### ***Trench 3***

A firm, naturally deposited bluish grey clay (308) with occasional bands of yellowish brown silt occurred in the base of Trench 3 (Figs 6, 7 & 11, Sections 3 & 13) (Plate 3) at a height of 1.68m OD.

This deposit was overlain by a 0.25m thick, firm, mid to dark grey alluvial clayey silt (307), with occasional charcoal flecks (Figs 7 & 11, Sections 3 & 13)

(Plate 3).

The alluvial silt deposit (307) was sealed by a layer of soft, yet friable, light whitish brown silt (306) (Figs 7 & 11, Sections 3 & 13) (Plate 3), containing frequent mollusc shells. This was the same shelly alluvium identified in Trenches 1 and 3. A second sample was obtained from this deposit and sent for analysis (Rackham, Appendix 4).

A soft and somewhat friable dark brown organic peat deposit (305) overlay deposit (306) and was 0.20m thick (Figs 7 & 11, Sections 3 & 13) (Plate 3).

Deposit (304) consisted of soft light brown alluvial clay, 0.15m thick (Figs 7 & 11, Sections 3 & 13) (Plate 3), which had formed above peat deposit (305).

A 0.45m thick former topsoil layer consisting of firm dark brown clayey silt (303) sealed clay deposit (304) (Figs 7 & 11, Sections 3 & 13) (Plate 3).

The dark brown silt (303) was overlain by a 0.25m thick layer of silt and modern rubble (302) (Figs 7 & 11, Sections 3 & 13) (Plate 3), which in turn was overlain by 0.40m thickness of modern rubble (301) with a thin surface deposit of stone chippings sealing it.

### ***Trench 4***

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 4 was a firm blue clay (408) with bands of light yellowish brown sandy silt (Figs 5 & 11, Section 14) (Plate 4). The upper surface of this natural deposit occurred at a height of 2.44m OD.

Overlying this clay was a 0.23m thick deposit of soft light bluish grey alluvial silt (407), which in turn was overlain by a 50mm thick soft light grey alluvial sandy silt (406) containing frequent mollusc

shells (Fig 11, Section 14) (Plate 4). This shelly alluvium was also recorded in Trenches 1-3 and represents a slow-moving or standing water environment.

A 0.12m thick deposit of soft dark greyish brown organic silty peat (405) had formed over sandy silt layer (406) (Fig 11, Section 14) (Plate 4), as in Trenches 1-3.

The peat layer was sealed by a firm mid bluish grey alluvial clay (404), 0.14m thick (Fig 11, Section 14) (Plate 4).

A 0.29m thick, buried topsoil of firm dark greyish brown clayey silt (403) overlay clay deposit (404) (Fig 11, Section 14) (Plate 4).

A layer of modern rubble (402), 0.40m thick, with a 50mm thick surface of stone chippings above it sealed deposit (403) (Fig 11, Section 14) (Plate 4).

#### **Trench 5**

The natural deposit identified at the base of Trench 5 was a firm blue clay (508) with bands of soft light yellowish brown sandy silt (Figs 5 & 11, Section 15), occurring at a height of 2.79m OD.

This was overlain by two layers of alluvial silt. A 0.13m thick light bluish grey silt (507) with a soft light grey sandy silt (506), 50mm thick and containing frequent mollusc shell fragments, above it (Fig 11, Section 15). Once again this is the same shelly alluvium seen in Trenches 1-4 across the northern end of the site.

A 0.12m thick deposit of soft dark greyish brown organic peaty silt (505) was formed above layer (506) (Fig 11, Section 15) signalling a change in the environment which is mirrored in Trenches 1-4.

The layer of peat was sealed by 0.15m of firm mid bluish grey alluvial clay (504) (Fig 11, Section 15).

A 0.25m thick former topsoil deposit (503) of firm dark greyish brown clayey silt overlay clay deposit (504) (Fig 11, Section 15).

This was overlain by a 0.15m thick deposit of brick rubble (502), with a 50mm thick yard surface of stone chippings (301) above it (Fig 11, Section 15).

#### **Trench 6**

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 6 was a firm mid bluish grey clay (605) containing occasional snail shells and small sub-rounded flints (Figs 6 & 8, Sections 4 & 6) (Plates 5-7). This was overlain by a second natural deposit consisting of firm yet friable mid reddish grey silty clay (604) with occasional clay patches and small sub-angular flints. This natural deposit occurred at a height of 3.26m OD in the southern end of the trench and 2.75m OD in the northern end.

Cut into natural deposit (604) was a partially exposed, probable circular or ovoid feature [609], measuring at least 1.25m in length by 0.20m deep with a concave base (Figs 6 & 8, Section 5). The feature extended 0.54m into the trench and was filled with a firm, but slightly friable, mid brownish grey clayey silt (608) with some yellowish brown mottle and frequent charcoal flecks.

This feature was sealed by a 0.12m thick layer of firm pale brownish grey alluvial silt (607)/(603), which gained some clay content in the northern end of the trench, containing very frequent mollusc shell fragments (Figs 6 & 8, Section 4-6) (Plate 6 & 7). This deposit differed in colour to the shelly alluvium recorded in Trenches 1-5, but had a very similar density of mollusc shells within it. It should be noted that the deposit contained less frequent mollusc shells towards the southern end of

the trench. A single fragment of fired clay was recovered from this deposit.

This was overlain by an up to 0.22m thick deposit of firm dark brown humic silty clay (606), which only occurred in the northern 6m of the trench (Figs 6 & 8, Section 6) (Plate 7). A fragment of fired clay and a freshwater mollusc shell were retrieved from this deposit.

A layer of firm mid grey silty clay (602) subsoil, containing occasional small sub-angular gravel and flints, formed above humic deposit (606) (Fig 8, Sections 4-6) (Plates 6-7).

Sealing this subsoil deposit was a 0.40m thick moderately firm dark greyish brown clayey silt (601) topsoil containing occasional small gravel and sub-angular flints.

### **Trench 7**

Natural deposits occurring at the base of Trench 7 were composed of firm light bluish grey clay (710) with occasional light yellowish brown mottle, and firm light bluish grey clay (712) with occasional light yellowish brown mottle and sub-angular stones (Figs 6 & 9, Section 7) (Plate 8). An identical deposit occurred at the base of the trench in the northern end where it was assigned context number (726) (Figs 6, 9 & 10, Section 11) (Plate 9).

Overlying deposits (710) and (712) was naturally deposited firm light yellowish brown clayey sandy silt (709), at least 0.15m thick, with occasional grit and small stones. Deposits (711), (714) and (720) were the same as (709) (Figs 6, 9 & 10, Sections 7, 8 & 11) (Plate 8). The upper surface of natural deposit (709)/(711)/(714)/(720) occurred at a height of 3.28m OD in the southern end of the trench.

The natural deposit in the far northern end of the trench was composed of firm light bluish grey clay (726) with light yellowish brown mottle and occasional small sub-angular stones (Fig 6). An ovoid, keyhole shaped feature [725], measuring 1.42m long x 0.80m wide, with steep sides breaking gradually to a flat base, was cut through deposit (726) (Figs 6 & 10, Sections 9 & 10) (Plate 9). This cut contained three fills, the first of which consisted of soft mid red silt and fired clay (724). A total of twelve fragments of fired clay was retrieved from this fill. The second fill comprised soft mid to light grey clayey silt (723) with a moderate amount of small fragments and flecks of fired clay. A sample of this deposit was taken for analysis (Rackham, Appendix 4). The third fill of this feature was a soft, mainly mid red scorched clayey silt (722).

A firm, 0.12m thick, deposit of light grey alluvial sandy clayey silt (707), containing occasional small sub-angular to sub-rounded stones overlay natural deposit (709)/(711)/(714)/(720). Deposits (708), (713) and (721) were the same as deposit (707) (Figs 6, 9 & 10, Sections 7, 8 & 11) (Plate 8).

A 0.23m thick deposit of firm dark grey clayey silt (706) and burnt flint and river pebbles was deposited on the upper surface of deposit (707)/(708)/(713)/(721) (Figs 9 & 10, Sections 7, 8 & 11) (Plate 8). A step at the southern end of the trench was excavated down to the level of this burnt material (706) and bulk samples were taken for analysis (Rackham, Appendix 4). The rest of the deposit was then carefully removed so as to ensure a secure context for any retrieved artefacts.

Cut through this deposit was a northwest to southeast oriented linear feature [716], 0.60m wide by 0.30m deep with very steep

sides breaking gradually to a flat base (Fig 9, Section 7). This small gully or ditch was filled with a firm mid grey clayey silt (715) containing occasional small sub-angular flints and stone.

Four successive layers of alluvium (718), (717), (705) and (704) overlay [716] (Figs 9 & 10, Sections 7 & 8) (Plate 8). These layers consisted of grey and brownish grey clayey silts. Deposit (705) contained a single fragment of Roman pottery. In the southern end of the trench these layers were at their thickest where (718), (717) and (705) had a combined thickness of *c.* 0.50m.

The alluvium was sealed by a 0.25m thick former topsoil layer consisting of dark greyish brown clayey silt (703) (Figs 9 & 10, Sections 7 & 11) (Plate 8).

A 0.40m thick layer of modern rubble (702) with an 80mm thick tarmac surface (701) above it overlay deposit (703) (Figs 9 & 10, Sections 7 & 11) (Plate 8).

## 6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprise clays and silty clays representing the upper surface of the underlying drift geology.

Feature [609] recorded in Trench 6 was sealed by all alluvial deposits, was cut into the natural clay and is likely to be among the earliest deposits recorded at the site. Although only partially exposed this feature was probably round or oval. Its shallow depth and lack of cultural material make interpretation problematic.

Trenches 1-5 in the north and north-eastern part of the site contained an identical sequence of deposits which illustrate the changing environment at the site over time. The lower deposits consisted of

alluvial silty clays (110)/(207)/(307)/(407)/(507) overlain by an alluvial silt containing an abundance of mollusc shells (109)/(206)/(306)/(406)/(506).

Samples of the mollusc rich deposit were taken from Trenches 1 and 3 and submitted to the Environmental Archaeology Consultancy for assessment (Rackham, Appendix 4).

The snails identified from the samples included only aquatic taxa. Several of the species are suggestive of large bodies of water, or running water, while others can be found in marshy environments. Taxa more typical of flowing river environments were absent, but this might be explained by the fenland context of slow moving water ways (Rackham, Appendix 4). It was determined that the assemblage as a whole might indicate a channel edge environment of a former river channel cut off by a change in course, or perhaps an area of open water on the edge of the fen (Rackham, Appendix 4). The possibility that this may represent a former course of the River Ouse (which became The Old Croft River after a cut was made between 1215 to 1270 to connect the River Ouse to the Little Ouse) is also raised, while small amounts of charcoal from both samples suggest human activity in the vicinity.

A layer of shelly silt (603)/(607) also occurred in Trench 6 in the western part of the site where it overlay the pit-like feature cut into the natural clay. However, this layer of silt was pale grey and yellowish brown, rather than the dark blue-grey colour of the shelly deposit seen in Trenches 1-5. It was also significantly thinner. This might suggest that the area by Trench 6 was wet for a shorter period of time than the area by Trenches 1-5.

As this deposit dried out it may have formed a palaeosol close to the edge of the

body of water to the north. The natural clay in this trench had the most pronounced descending slope (south to north) of any of the trenches. The difference in height from the southern end of the trench to the northern was 0.51m and it seems probable that this natural deposit sloped down to the edge of the body of water, which existed in the lower middle part of the site, close to the southern end of Trench 6. The shelly deposit above the natural suggests that this slope may in fact briefly have formed the edge of the body of water.

There is a slight slope downwards from Trench 7 to Trench 6 but this is relatively gentle compared to the descending slope to the north and north-east of these trenches. Figure 3 shows some estimates of where the southern edge of the water may have been.

An area of standing water was identified during investigations of an Iron Age settlement 400m to the west of the development site (MCB17425). It is possible that these two bodies of water may be connected.

In Trench 7 a sandy clayey silt deposit overlay the natural clay and formed a land surface over which a scatter of burnt flint and black clayey silt (706)/(719) was deposited. In the eastern section this deposit reached a maximum thickness of 0.23m while it was only intermittently visible as very thin patches in the western section, suggesting that the trench was placed over the edge of a scatter. Although there is a lack of dating evidence, it seems probable that this deposit represents the edge of a 'burnt mound', a distinctive type of archaeological site, the main flourish of which (in Britain) is from the Bronze Age through into the Iron Age (Hedges 1974-5).

Typically burnt mounds are characterised by '...a location close to water; large accumulations of heat cracked stones and charcoal, usually devoid of other artefacts; traces of hearths; and a rectangular trough or basin with stone, clay or wooden lining clearly designed to hold water' (Barfield & Hodder 1987, 370). The stones are heated with the hearths and then placed in the trough or basin to heat the water, thus shattering and cracking the flint. These are often interpreted as cooking sites, despite a lack of settlement evidence and food debris (there is often a total lack of animal bone as well as artefacts associated with cooking or settlement at 'burnt mound' sites). What is clear is that these sites produce burnt flint and hot water (and thereby steam) on a significant scale. This has prompted Barfield and Hodder (1987) to argue convincingly that these sites may represent the remains of steam or sauna baths.

The two samples that were taken from the burnt flint deposit at the present site produced an abundance of burnt stone, a total of 1.602kg, which accounts for just over 7% of the entire sample. Along with the fire cracked and burnt stone the samples also contained, flint and river pebbles, small flakes of unburnt flint (probably debitage), a small assemblage of animal bone, including a sheep/goat tooth fragment, a small charcoal assemblage and a little fired earth.

Rackham (Appendix 4) has remarked that the interpretation of this site as a burnt mound is problematic, as the burnt mound deposits that his organisation have processed '...have generally been devoid of flint debitage and animal bone' and that their presence in this trench could suggest '...proximity to an occupation site, although this need not rule out a burnt mound deposit as well.' However, although many typical burnt mound sites



exhibit a complete lack of animal bone or struck flint, this is certainly not always the case. In a fenland context, burnt mounds at Feltwell and Northwold both contained small amounts of animal bone (Crowson *et al* 2000) (it should be noted that these bone assemblages are so small as to remain inconsistent with an interpretation of burnt mounds as cooking sites). A small amount of struck flint was also recovered at Feltwell (Crowson 2000, 185), while at Coveney, 30-40% of the flint from that burnt mound was found to have been previously worked (Evans 2000, 47).

Bearing this in mind, and considering the location of the burnt stone deposit next to a water source (demonstrated by the mollusc assemblages from samples in Trenches 1 and 3), the argument for this deposit being representative of a typical 'burnt mound' site is strong. And although the rectangular trough or basin, with a lining, that is common to these sites was not in evidence at Littleport, it is probable that the evaluation trench only exposed the edge of the mound and so this feature may yet exist.

An ovoid feature [725] cut through the natural at the northern end of Trench 7 contained 12 fragments of fired clay. A sample was taken from the middle of this feature which was found to contain some fire debris, including a little 'clinker', fired earth, magnetised small stones and a little charcoal. Although this feature was observed cut through the natural and as such would appear to stratigraphically predate the burnt stone deposit, this may have been due to over machining. This feature was difficult to identify while machining (its edges were unclear and it was located on the very edge of a sondage) and may well have cut the thin palaeosol deposit above it, over which the deposit of burnt stone was dumped. Unfortunately no part of this feature was revealed in the

trench section. If it is the case that this feature is contemporary with the burnt stone deposit, then the fill might contain debris from a hearth associated with the burnt mound. As it stands it certainly denotes activity involving fire in the area.

A thin northwest-southeast oriented small gully or ditch [716] was cut through the burnt stone deposit near the southern end of Trench 7. Its purpose remains unclear.

A layer of organic silty peat (108)/(205)/(305)/(405)/(505) was observed in Trenches 1-5 sealing the shelly alluvium deposit which denoted a body of water in the northern part of the site. The layer of peat suggests that as the water in the northern part of the site was retreating the area became freshwater reed swamp. It is probable that the practices that produced the burnt stone deposit ceased at the site when the water retreated. The humic layer (606) recorded in the northern end of Trench 6, which contained a freshwater mollusc, may represent the edge of the peat formation. This further illustrates that the edge of the body of water at the site was very close to the southern end of Trench 6. This humic deposit was overlain by a silty clay subsoil which is likely to have had an alluvial origin followed by a layer of topsoil.

In Trenches 1-5 the peat deposit was overlain by alluvium (107)/(204)/(304)/(404)/(504) which probably indicates a period of flooding. In Trench 7 four layers of alluvium (704)/(705)/(717)/(718) were identified overlying the small ditch or gully which was cut through the deposit containing burnt stone, these layers are probably roughly contemporary with the alluvium in Trenches 1-5.

In Trench 1 an approximately east-west oriented ditch [106] was cut through the



alluvium (107) indicating a return to drier conditions and activity at the southern part of the site. A fragment of white pottery was observed in a fill of this ditch during machining which suggests a post-medieval or later date for this feature.

The alluvium in Trenches 1-5 and 7 was sealed by a layer of former topsoil, probably contemporary with the topsoil in Trench 6. The old topsoil was covered by a modern levelling deposit of rubble and a thin yard surface associated with the former garage at the site.

## 7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at 40-42 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire, as the site lay in an area of known archaeological remains dating from prehistory to the present day.

The site lies in close proximity to Iron Age settlement remains and adjacent to a Roman settlement of some importance, occupied from the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD to the late 4<sup>th</sup> century. This (possible villa) settlement had at least 8 successive phases of occupation beginning and ending with large enclosure and drainage ditches. Roman field systems have been identified in the field to the north of the site, while still further to the north, Roman salt-making sites are clustered along the roddon of the Old Croft River.

However, only a single fragment of Roman pottery was recovered during the investigation. Instead, the evaluation revealed evidence for a body of water at the northern end of the site and the edge of a scatter of burnt stone near the waters' edge, including burnt flint and river pebbles. It is argued that this deposit is representative of a typical 'burnt mound'

site and is therefore likely to be Bronze Age in date. A small assemblage of animal bone, charcoal, a little fired earth and some small flakes of unburnt flint (probably debitage) were revealed during environmental analysis of this deposit.

A pit at the western end of the site predated all other features but contained no material. An ovoid feature close to the burnt stone deposit contained a small amount of fire debris which could possibly be associated with activity at the burnt mound. A ditch at the north-eastern end of the site probably dates to the post-medieval period.

The sequence of deposits recorded in Trenches 1-5 in the northern part of the site illustrates the changing environmental conditions at the site through time. The basal layers of alluvium and shelly alluvium signify wet conditions, specifically slow moving or standing water. Burnt mound sites are always situated on the edge of a body of water, so it is probable that these wet conditions prevailed during the Bronze Age. The shelly alluvium was overlain by a peat deposit, signalling a change to freshwater reed swamp conditions. Another layer of alluvium probably represents a flooding episode or inundation. When this dries out a probable post-medieval ditch is cut through it. Over this is a layer of former topsoil buried by made up ground associated with the former garage and petrol station at the site.

A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered during the investigation along with 17 fragments of fired clay, a piece of burnt stone and a freshwater mollusc shell. Quantities of burnt flint and pebbles were sent for environmental analysis.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Lindum Sturgen for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation. The work was coordinated by Dale Trimble who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Kasia Gdaniec, the Senior Archaeologist at Cambridgeshire Archaeology Planning & Countryside Advice, kindly provided background information. Dave Start allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Dale Trimble  
 Site Staff: Andrew Failes, Ross Kendall, Chris Moulis  
 Finds Processing: Denise Buckley  
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
 Illustration: Andrew Failes  
 Post-excavation Analyst: Andrew Failes

## 10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

BGS, 1984 *Peterborough; solid and drift geology*, 1:50,000 map sheet **158**

Boreham, S., Dr. 2007 in Collins, M., 2007 *Half Moon Reservoir, Redmere Farm, Burnt Fen, Littleport, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation* unpublished CAFU report No: **796**

Collins, M., 2007 *Half Moon Reservoir, Redmere Farm, Burnt Fen, Littleport, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Evaluation* unpublished CAFU report No: **796**

Crowson, A., Lane, T., & Reeve, J. 2000 *Fenland Management Project Excavations 1991-1995* Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Series No 3, Short Run Press Ltd: Exeter

Crowson, A., 2000 'Chapter 4: Norfolk

Excavation Results' Results' In A. Crowson, T. Lane & J. Reeve (eds) *Fenland Management Project Excavations 1991-1995* Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Series No 3, Short Run Press Ltd: Exeter

Evans, C., 2000 'Chapter 2: Cambridgeshire: Excavation Results' In A. Crowson, T. Lane & J. Reeve (eds) *Fenland Management Project Excavations 1991-1995* Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Series No 3, Short Run Press Ltd: Exeter

English Heritage, 2002 *Environmental Archaeology. A guide to the theory and practise of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation*

Greene, R., 2008 *Land adjoining 80 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire: An Archaeological Excavation Interim Report* Archaeological Solutions unpublished interim report No **3008**

Hall, D. N., 1996 The Fenland Project, Number 10: Cambridgeshire Survey, Isle of Ely and Wisbech. **EAA 79**

Hedges, J., 1974-5 Excavation of two Orcadian burnt mounds at Liddle and Beauquoy, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* **106**: 38-98

Holt, R., 2008 Archaeological Assessment Report on land at Highfield Farm, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. Unpublished APS report **120/07**

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation*

Lucas, G., 1998 *Highfield Farm, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. A Desktop Study* CAU Report No 243

Macaulay, S. 1999. Camel Road, Littleport. Post-Excavation Assessment & Updated Project Design. Oxford Archaeology unpublished report.

## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

- APS Archaeological Project Services
- CAFU Cambridgeshire County Council  
Archaeological Field Unit
- IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

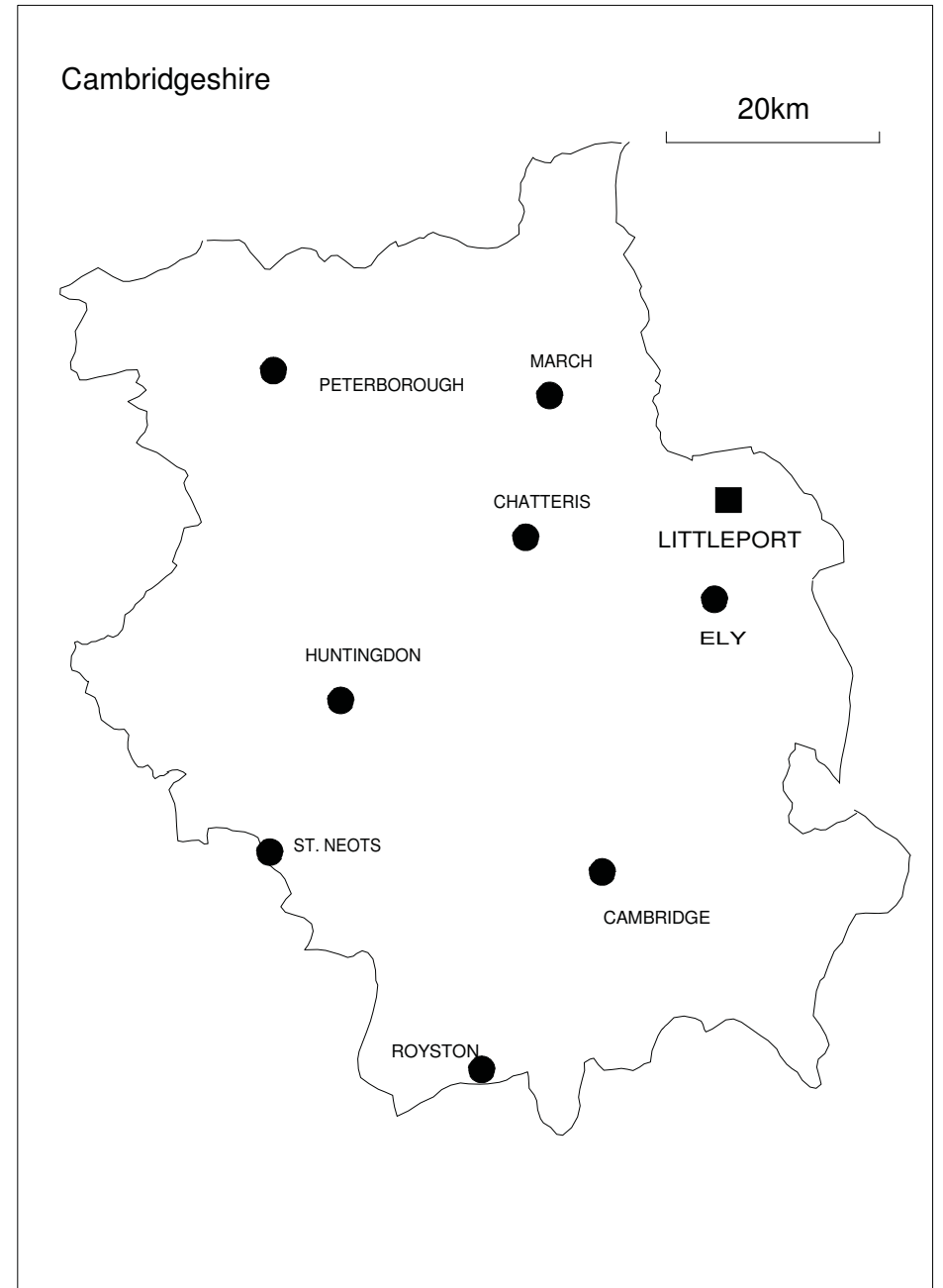
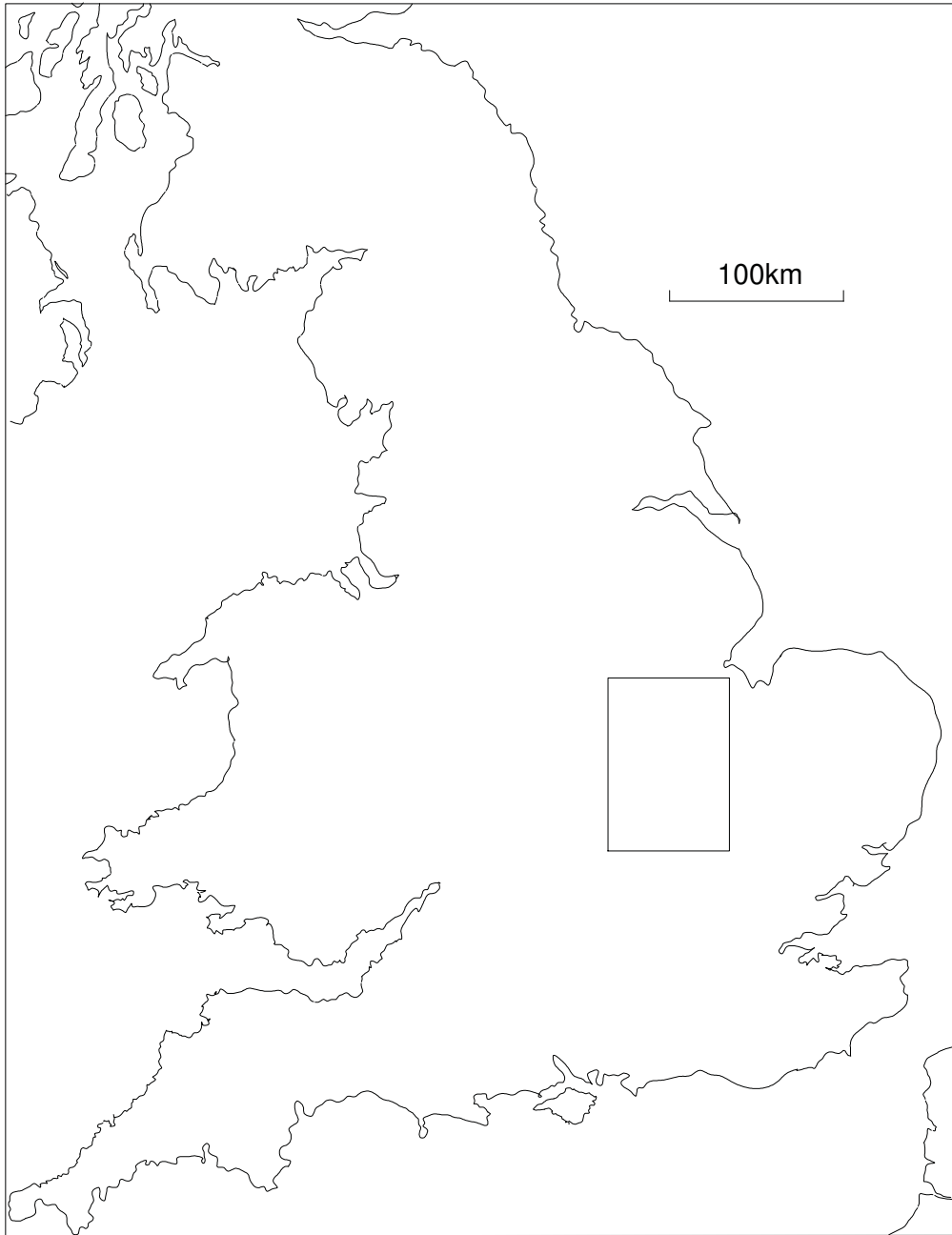


Figure 1 - General location plan

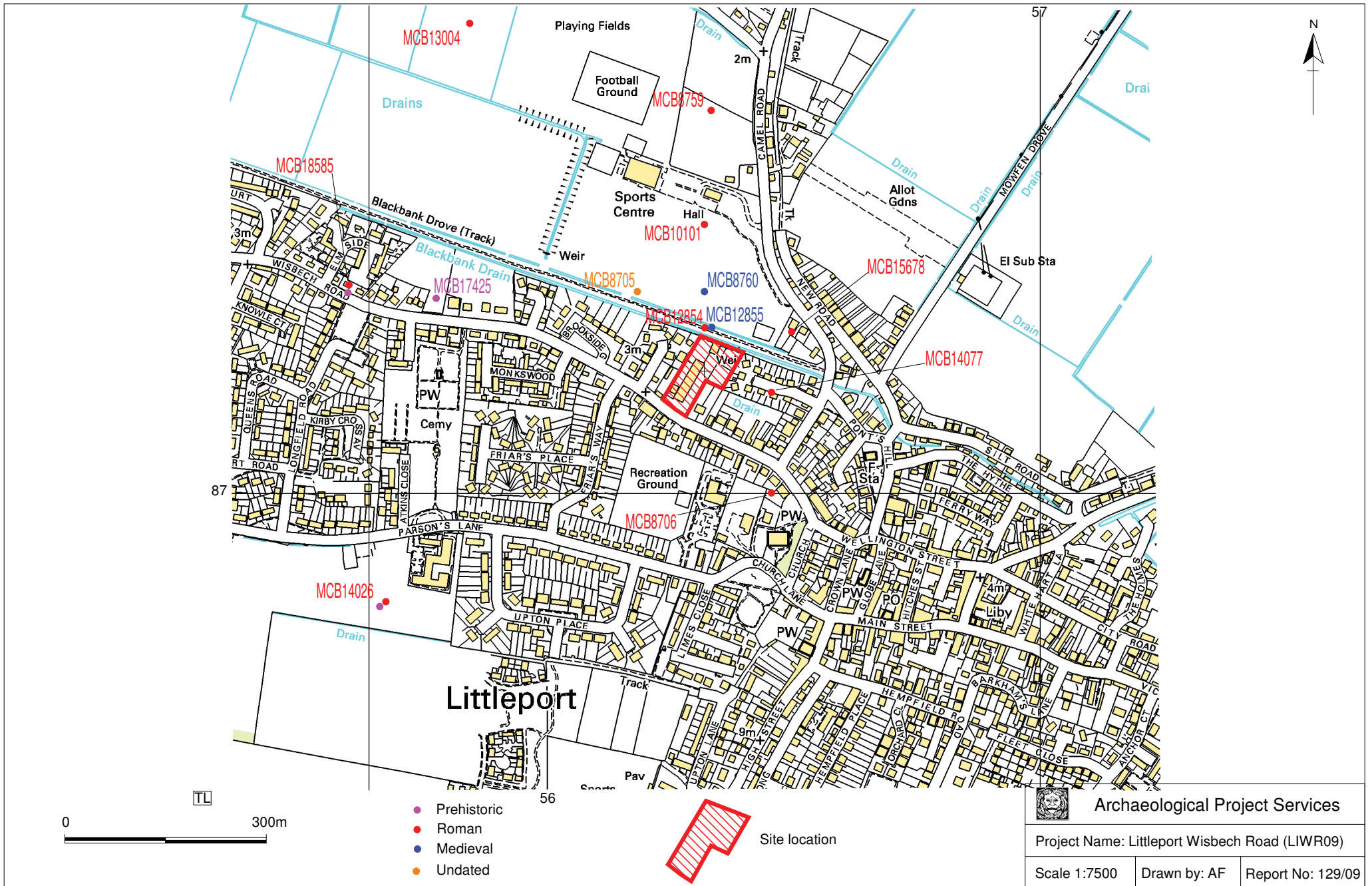


Figure 2 - Site location and surrounding archaeology

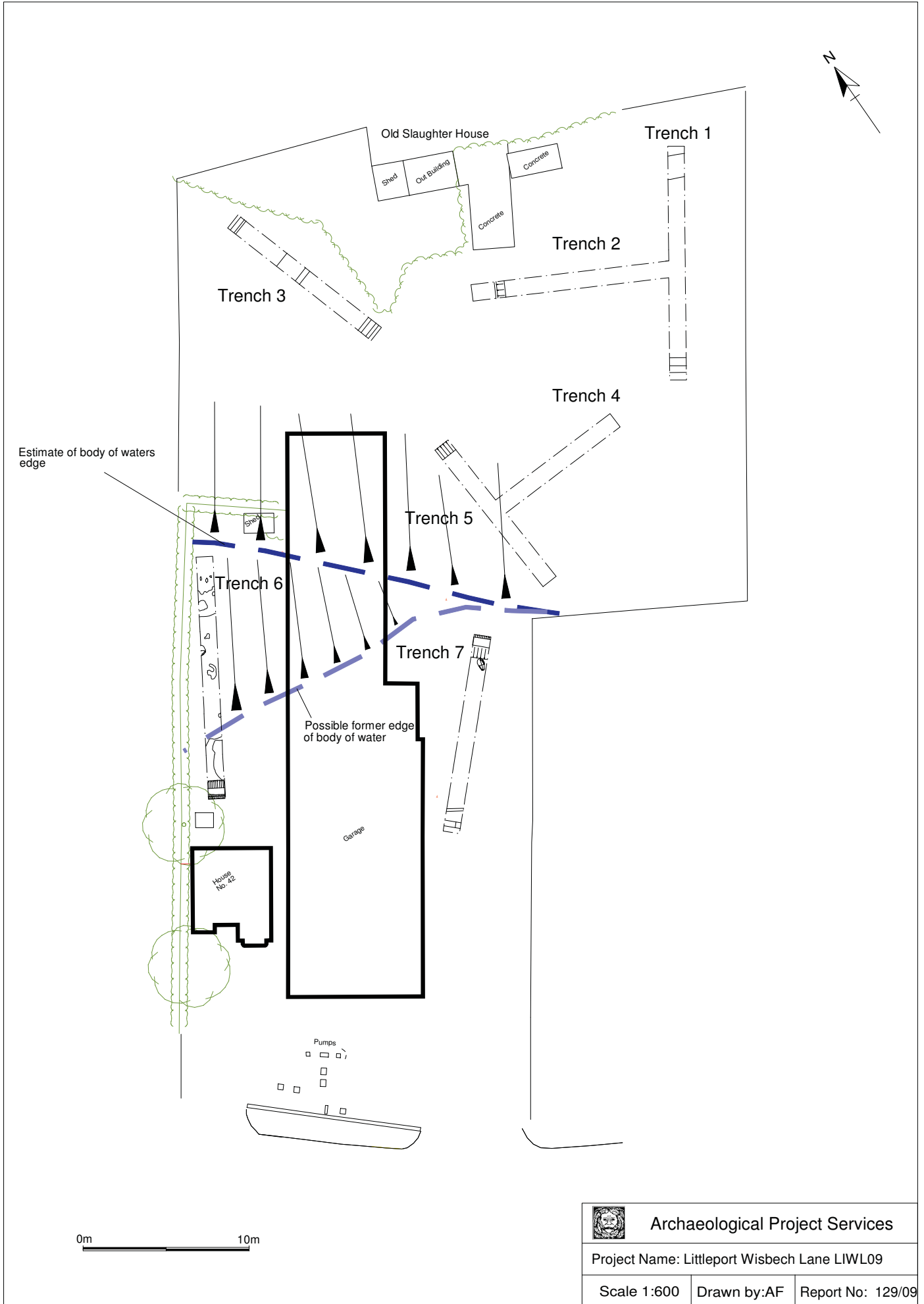
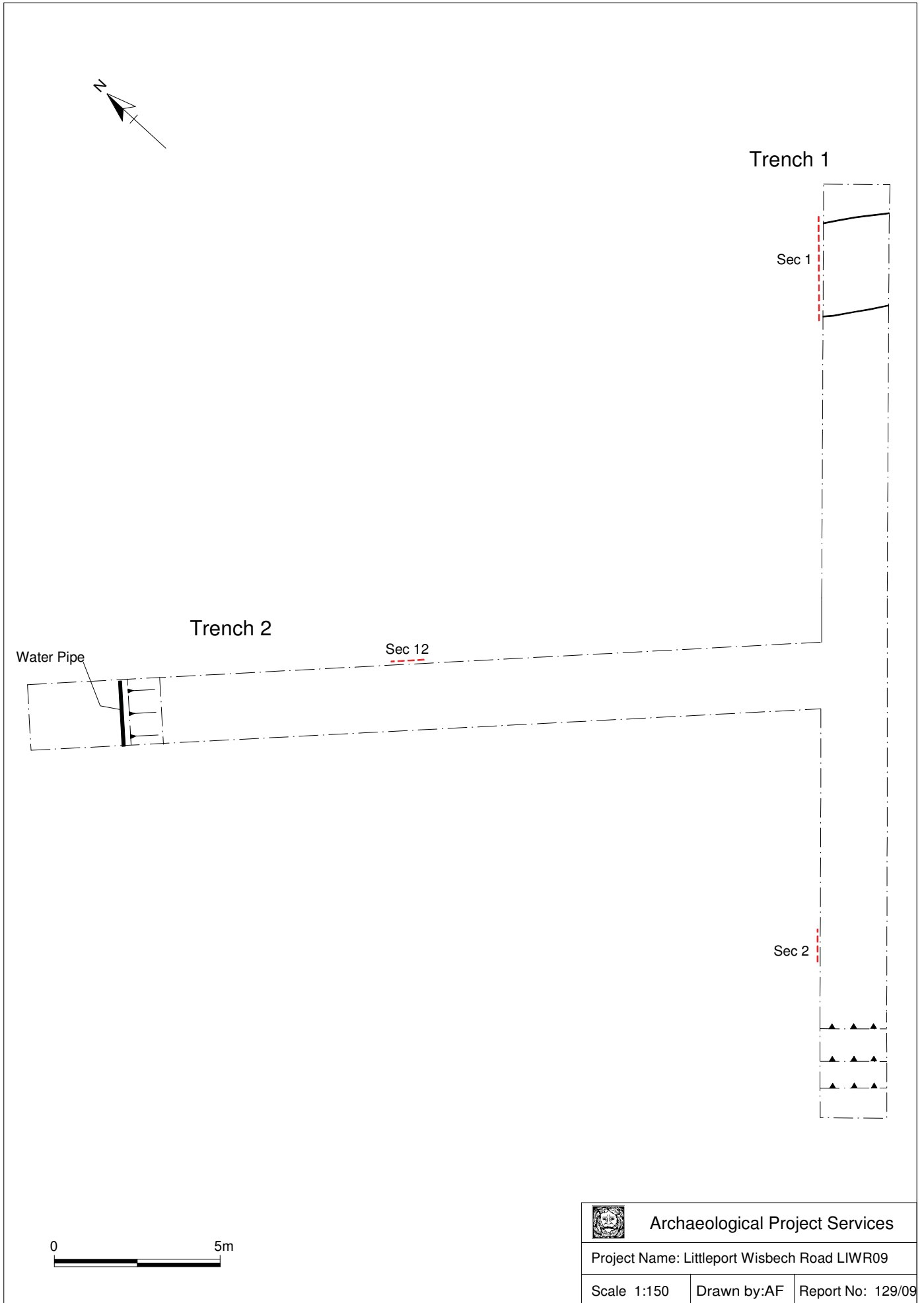


Figure 3 - Site plan and trench locations






 <b>Archaeological Project Services</b>		
Project Name: Littleport Wisbech Road LIWR09		
Scale 1:150	Drawn by:AF	Report No: 129/09

Figure 4 - Plan of Trenches 1 and 2

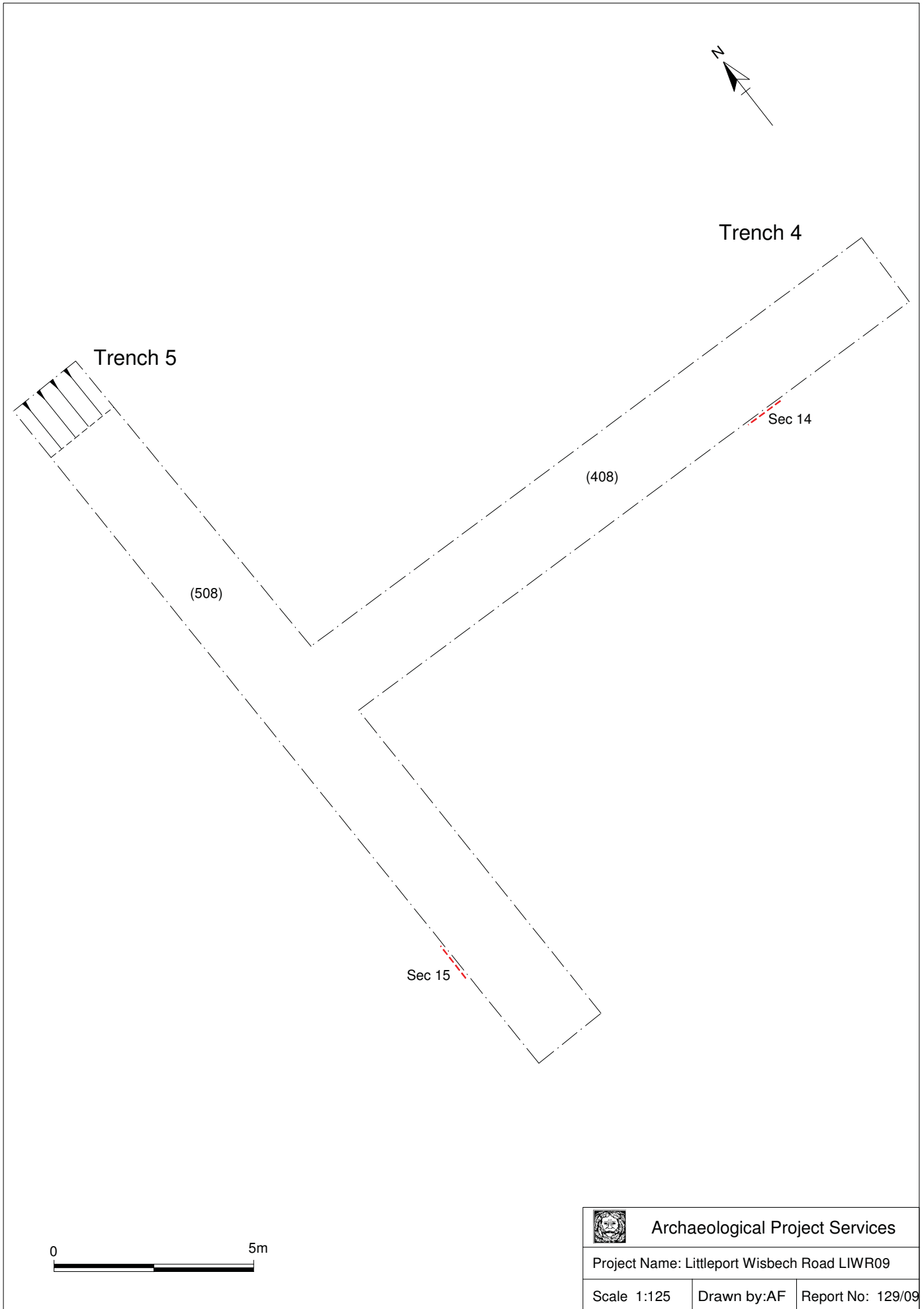


Figure 5 - Plan of Trenches 4 and 5

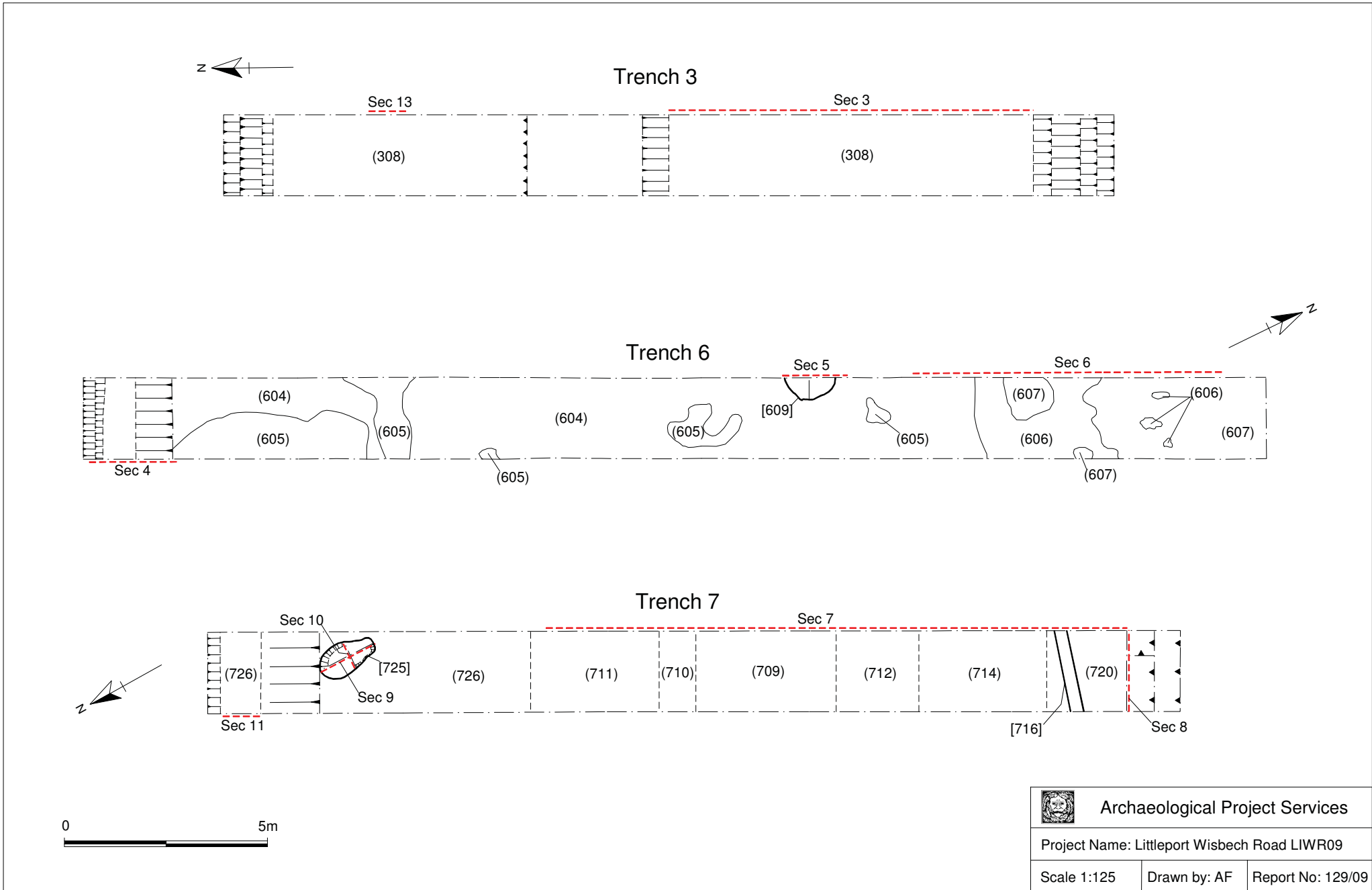
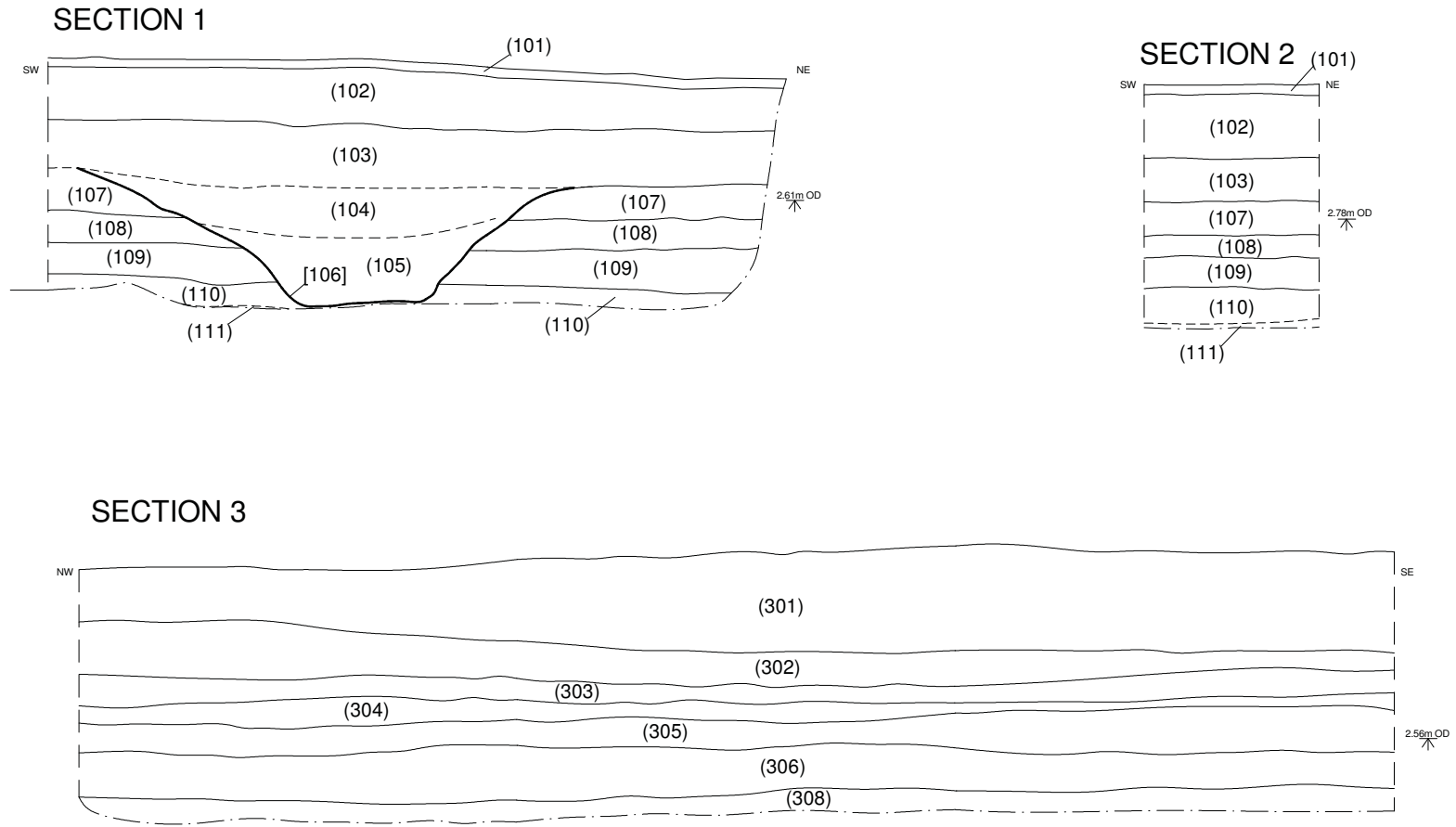


Figure 6 - Plan of Trenches 3, 6 and 7



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Littleport Wisbech Road LIWR09

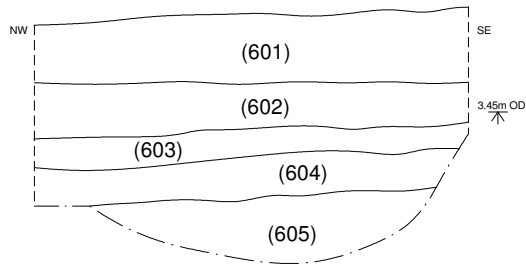
Scale 1:40

Drawn by: AF

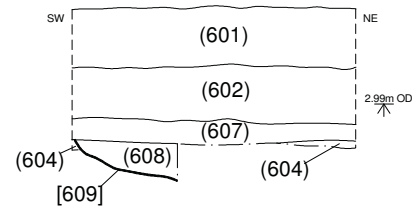
Report No: 129/09

Figure 7 - Sections 1-3

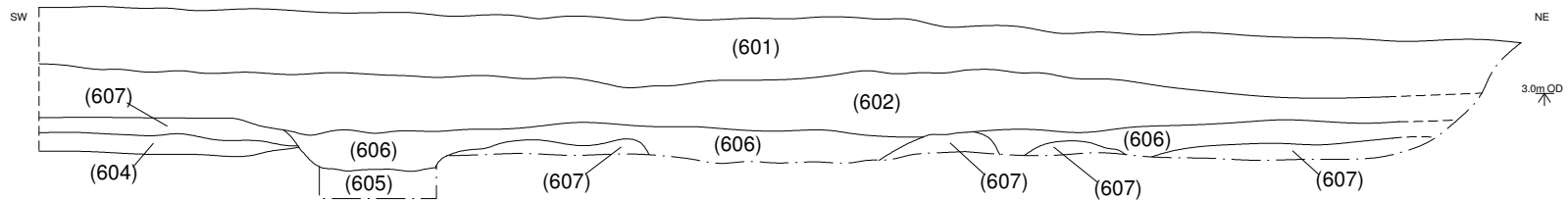
### SECTION 4



### SECTION 5



### SECTION 6



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Littleport Wisbech Road LIWR09

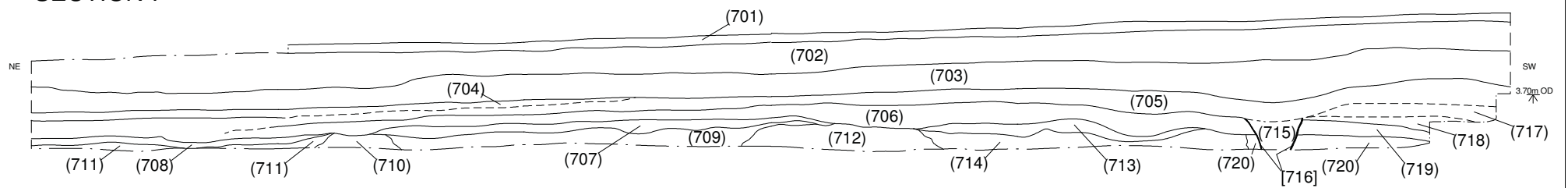
Scale 1:40

Drawn by: AF

Report No: 129/09

Figure 8 - Sections 4-6

# SECTION 7




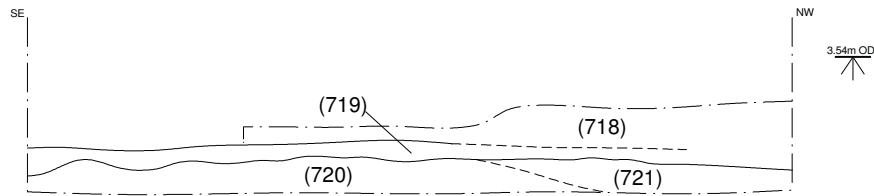
	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: Littleport Wisbech Road LIWR09		
Scale 1:60	Drawn by: AF	Report No: 129/09

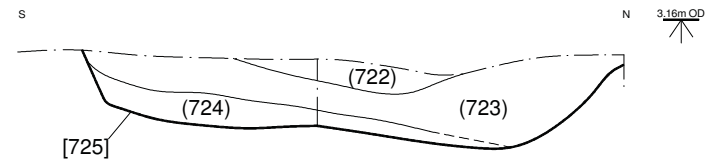
Figure 9 - Section 7



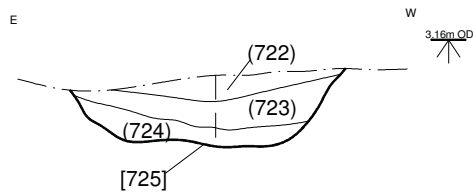
SECTION 8



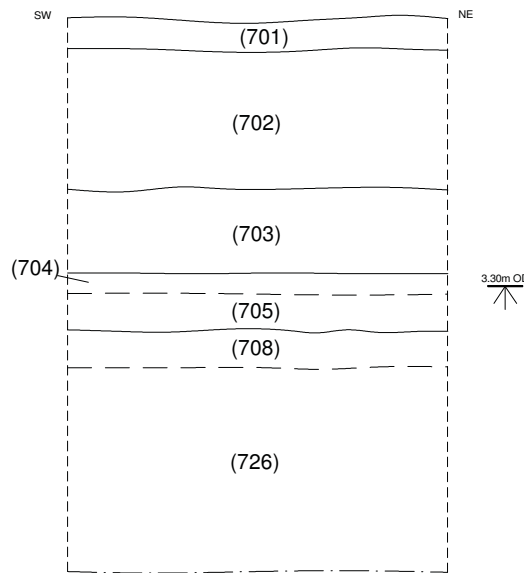
SECTION 9



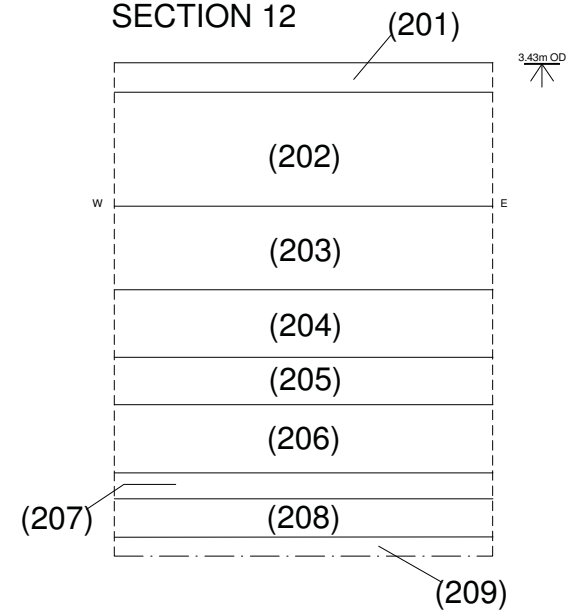
SECTION 10



SECTION 11



SECTION 12




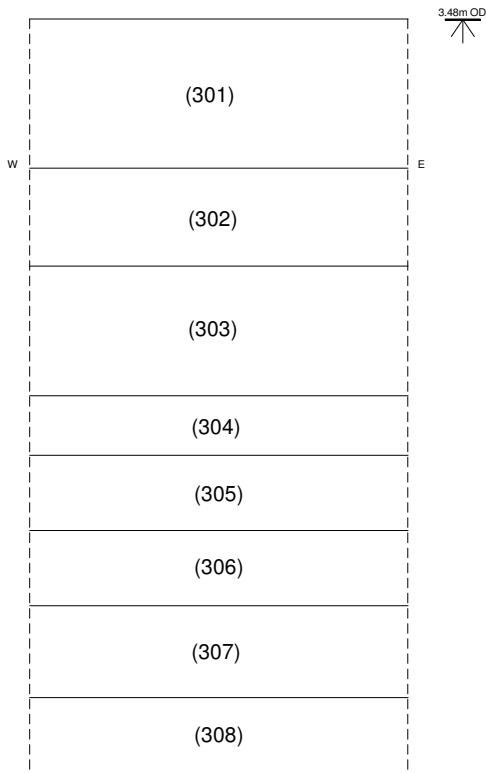
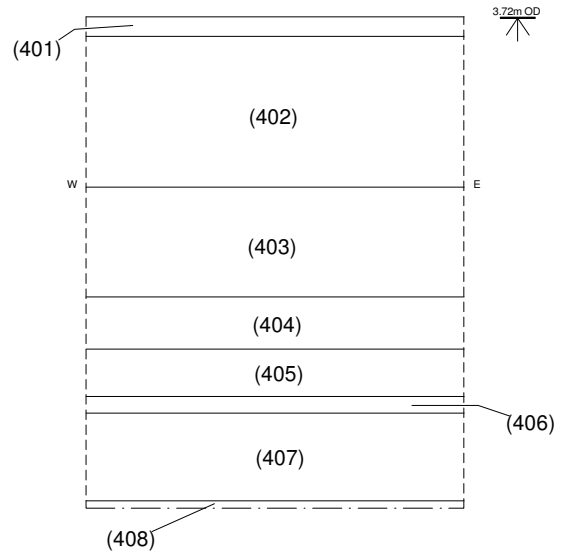
 Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Littleport Wisbech Road LIWR09		
Scale 1:20	Drawn by: AF	Report No: 129/09

Figure 10 - Sections 8-12

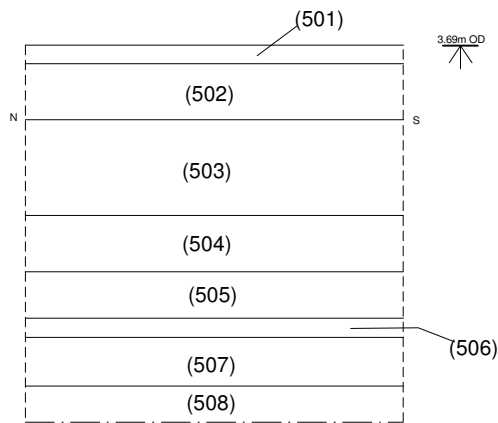
### SECTION 13



### SECTION 14



### SECTION 15



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Littleport Wisbech Road LIWR09

Scale 1:20

Drawn by:AF

Report No: 129/09

Figure 11 - Sections 13-15



Plate 1 – Trench 1

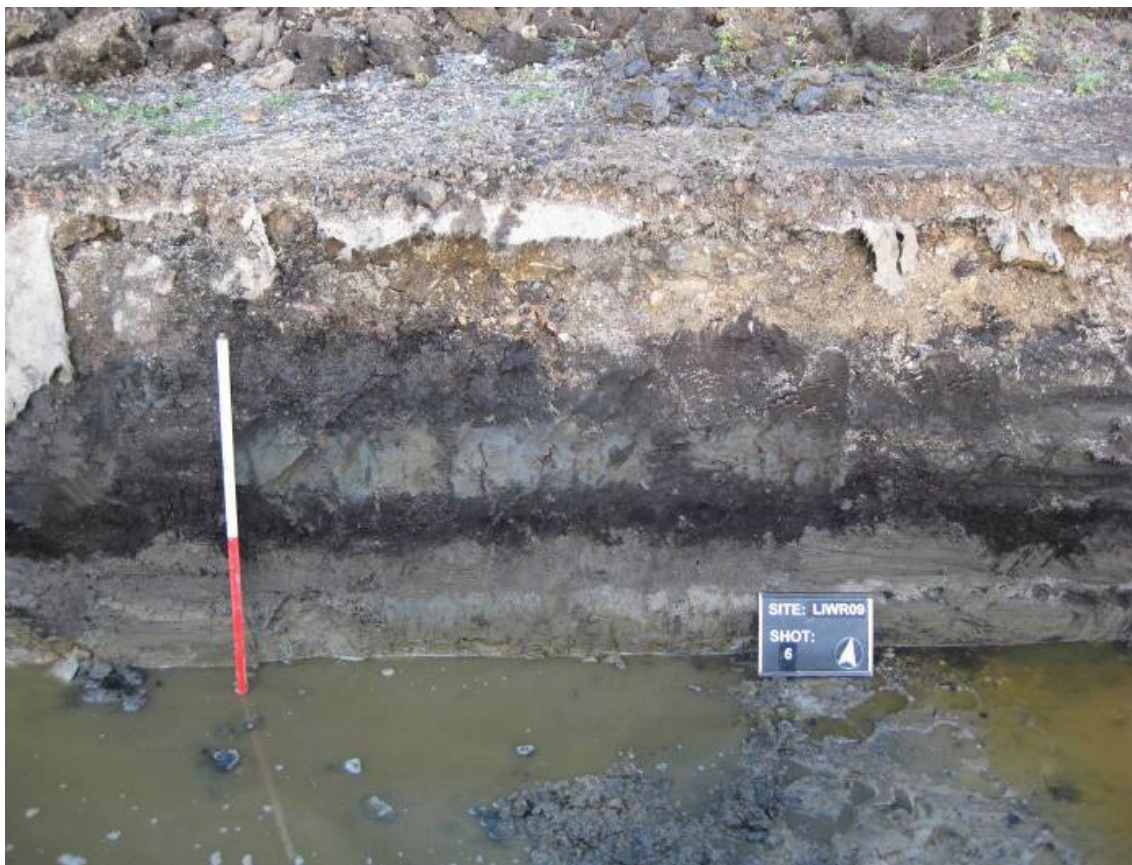


Plate 2 – Trench 2, Section 12





Plate 3 – Trench 3, Section 3



Plate 4 – Trench 4, Section 14





Plate 5 – Trench 6



Plate 6 – Trench 6, Section 4





Plate 7 – Trench 6, Section 6



Plate 8 – Trench 7, Section 7



Plate 9 – Trench 7, Pit [725]



# **Appendix 1**

**LAND OFF  
40 WISBECH ROAD, LITTLEPORT  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

**SPECIFICATION FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

**PREPARED FOR  
LINDUM STURGEON**

**BY  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES  
Institute of Field Archaeologists'  
Registered Archaeological Organisation No. 21**

**OCTOBER 2009**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 SUMMARY ..... 1

2 INTRODUCTION..... 1

3 SITE LOCATION..... 1

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND ..... 2

5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY ..... 2

7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES ..... 3

8 TRIAL TRENCHING..... 4

9 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT ..... 5

10 POST-EXCAVATION AND REPORT ..... 5

11 ARCHIVE..... 7

12 REPORT DEPOSITION ..... 7

13 PUBLICATION..... 7

14 CURATORIAL MONITORING ..... 7

15 VARIATIONS TO THE PROPOSED SCHEME OF WORKS..... 7

16 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT..... 8

17 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS ..... 9

18 INSURANCES..... 9

19 COPYRIGHT ..... 9

20 BIBLIOGRAPHY ..... 9

Figure 1 Trench layout

## **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 *This document comprises a specification for the archaeological evaluation of land off 40 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire.*
- 1.2 *The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area on the edge of a former Fen island. Previous work in the area has identified a possible saltern and high status Roman occupation.*
- 1.3 *Commercial development of the site is proposed. Archaeological evaluation is proposed in order to assess the archaeological implications of the proposed development. This will comprise a programme of trial trenching forming a 5% sample of the proposed area of development.*
- 1.4 *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the findings of the investigation. The report will consist of a text describing the nature of the archaeological deposits located and will be supported by illustrations and photographs.*

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 This document comprises a specification for the evaluation of land north of 40 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire.
  - 2.1.1 The document contains the following parts:
  - 2.1.2 Overview
  - 2.1.3 The archaeological and natural setting
  - 2.1.4 Stages of work and methodologies to be used
  - 2.1.5 List of specialists
  - 2.1.6 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

## **3 SITE LOCATION**

- 3.1 Littleport lies 8km northeast of Ely and 30km north of Cambridge in northeastern Cambridgeshire. The proposed development is situated approximately 0.35km west of the centre of the town as defined by the parish church. The application area occupies a roughly rectangular plot of approximately 6500m<sup>2</sup>, fronting onto the north side of 40 Wisbech Road and centred on NGR TL 5649 8718.

## **4 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Due to the high archaeological potential of the site, a condition has been placed on planning consent (Application 09/00336/FUM) by East Cambridgeshire District Council requiring a scheme of archaeological work to be undertaken at the site. The first phase of this work will be an archaeological evaluation to assess the nature and potential of the site, and to determine the need for any future site investigation. This specification deals solely with the evaluation phase.
- 4.2 The proposed development includes the construction of retail based mix use comprising of a supermarket, car parking and separate funeral parlour/undertakers (demolition of No. 42). The previous use of the site was as a petrol filling station and for scrap car storage, with a detached

bungalow.

## **5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 5.1 The site lies in the Cambridgeshire fenland, situated on the northern edge of a former fen island created by a gravel capped prominence of Kimmeridge Clay. Soils of the area are Ashley Association clayey stagnogleyic argillic brown earths.

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW**

- 6.1 The Fenland has long been recognised as an important archaeological landscape, containing superimposed evidence of settlement, ritual and agricultural remains dating from the prehistoric period onwards. Littleport occupies an island of boulder clays capped with glacial sand and gravel protruding through fen deposits. The course of the Old Croft River, formerly the main channel which drained the water of the fen basin in this area, lies on the northern side of the island.
- 6.2 The main island comprises an area of around 400 hectares and rises to around 20m OD. The remainder of the parish lies in fen ground apart from two smaller islands at Apes Hall and Butchers Hill.
- 6.3 Excavations at Peacocks farm in the southeast of the parish provided the first dating of the Fenland Flandrian deposits, and several more recent investigations have added chronological and stratigraphic detail to the sequence. Radiocarbon determinations from the Peacocks Farm site indicate that by around the middle of the 7th millennium BC the area was subject to rising water levels and peat was forming in the deep channels surrounding the island. Mesolithic flints recovered from the buried ground surface at Peacocks Farm and Letter F Farm, also located in the southeast of the parish on a sandy outcrop, demonstrate a human presence in the landscape prior to peat deposition (Hall 1996).
- 6.4 Deposits of marine alluvium seal these ‘lower’ peats. Radiocarbon dates from Main Drain near Peacocks Farm indicate that marine conditions prevailed by the late 5th millennium BC. An environment of mudflats drained by a dendritic pattern of creeks and channels would have prevailed for much of this marine phase. Radiocarbon dates from Welney indicate a return to freshwater conditions by the Iron Age, although silty deposits on the banks of the Old Croft River demonstrate that this major channel continued to be tidal.
- 6.5 Survey of the parish of Littleport (Hall 1996) identified a number of prehistoric and Roman sites in the area. A concentration of prehistoric finds was located at the southeast of the parish, located on small sand islands and represents the western extent of the intense activity of the period identified at Huckwold and Mildenhall in Norfolk. On Littleport island itself the survey recovered little in the way of prehistoric material, the only two sites identified comprising sparse scatters of prehistoric flint located one and two kilometres south of the proposed development.
- 6.6 Closer to the proposed development, late Iron Age remains were discovered during excavations undertaken in January 2008 at 80 Wisbech Road, Littleport. These comprised two ditches, two gullies, postholes, and numerous pits. Finds recovered from the features comprised pottery, struck flint, flint tools, a quartzite pebble hammer, animal bone and burnt stone, all in a somewhat abraded condition (Greene, 2008).
- 6.7 Romano-British occupation sites are recorded within 1km to the north of the application area (HER 08425, 10939, 11961). Investigations at one of these sites produced pottery, glass and box-tile dated to the 3rd-4th century AD, illustrating that the Littleport settlement was ‘fairly well Romanised’ (Lucas 1998). Subsequent excavation at Camel Road, located approximately 100m east of the proposed development, revealed evidence of a Roman settlement of some importance with occupation

dating from the mid-2nd century AD to the late 4th century (Macauley 1999). The Cambridgeshire HER records ‘Excavations revealed a high status (possible villa) Roman settlement, with at least 8 successive phases of occupation spanning 250 years of the Romano-British period. No prehistoric or later medieval remains were discovered. Land use and function of the site changed over time reflecting the broader settlement at Littleport and the Roman fenland in general. Occupation both begins and ends with large enclosure and drainage ditches, possibly also related to livestock control. The first phase of occupation begins in the Antonine-Hadrianic period (AD117-161). Throughout the late 2nd century there is continuing occupation, and periodic flooding, with extensive inundations resulting in the site being covered by alluvium. The site was reused shortly thereafter (late 2nd C), with land use changing to proto-industrial activity marked by narrow flat based vertical sided ditches, slots and tanks. In the later 2-3rd C the site was not flooded, and the only building recorded (a roundhouse) was constructed. Evidence for wattle and daub walls, with daub being covered with an unusual white plaster or rendering. The final phases of activity in the mid 3rd-early 4th C sees land use change from occupation back to industrial activity. This latter phase was short-lived and abandoned near the end of the 3rd C to be replaced by large rectilinear enclosure ditches, droveways and shift to pasture (HER 10939).

- 6.8 The Historic Environmental Record also contains records of plotted cropmarks in the fields just 50m to the north of 40 Wisbech Road, immediately to the north of Black Bank Drove. These are thought to be associated with Romano-British salt making and settlement (HER ECB139 & 140 & 07221).
- 6.9 The Fenland Survey recorded evidence for a single saltern among the cluster of Romano-British sites on the northeast edge of Littleport island. However, many more salterns of the period follow the raised levees of the Old Croft River, between 2 and 5 kilometres north of Littleport island (Hall 1996).
- 6.10 Geotechnical investigations at the proposed development revealed Kimmeridge clays across the site, buried at depths of between 1.0 – 1.4 m at the south end of the site and at around 1.7m to 1.9m in some areas to the north. Above the clays were ‘Terrington Beds’ of variable thickness, ranging from around 0.4 – 0.6m at the south end of the site to around 1.5m in some places to the north. The ‘Terrington Bed’ deposits are likely to represent silts and clays associated with deposition from a Roddon.

## **7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- 7.1 The aim of the work will be to gather sufficient information for the archaeological curator to be able to formulate a policy for the management of the archaeological resources present on the site.
- 7.2 The objectives of the work will be to:
- 7.2.1 Establish the type of archaeological activity that may be present within the site.
  - 7.2.2 Determine the likely extent of archaeological activity present within the site.
  - 7.2.3 Determine the date and function of the archaeological features present on the site.
  - 7.2.4 Determine the state of preservation of the archaeological features present on the site.
  - 7.2.5 Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features present within the site.
  - 7.2.6 Determine the extent to which the surrounding archaeological features extend into the application area.

- 7.2.7 Establish the way in which the archaeological features identified fit into the pattern of occupation and land-use in the surrounding landscape.

## 8 TRIAL TRENCHING

### 8.1 Reasoning for this technique

- 8.1.1 Trial trenching enables the *in situ* determination of the sequence, date, nature, depth, environmental potential and density of archaeological features present on the site.
- 8.1.2 The trial trenching will comprise the excavation of a seven trenches forming close to 5% sample of the development arranged as shown on Figure 1.

### 8.2 General Considerations

- 8.2.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the investigation.
- 8.2.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practice issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). *Archaeological Project Services* is an IFA Registered Archaeological Organisation (No. 21).
- 8.2.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.
- 8.2.4 Excavation of the archaeological features exposed will only be undertaken as far as is required to determine their date, sequence, density and nature. All archaeological features exposed will be excavated and recorded unless otherwise agreed with the Cambridgeshire Archaeology Office. The investigation will, as far as is reasonably practicable, determine the level of the natural deposits to ensure that the depth of the archaeological sequence present on the site is established.
- 8.2.5 Open trenches will be marked by hazard tape attached to road irons or similar poles. Subject to the consent of the archaeological curator, and following the appropriate recording, the trenches, particularly those of excessive depth, will be backfilled as soon as possible to minimise any health and safety risks.

### 8.3 Methodology

- 8.3.1 Removal of the topsoil and any other overburden will be undertaken by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. To ensure that the correct amount of material is removed and that no archaeological deposits are damaged, this work will be supervised by Archaeological Project Services. On completion of the removal of the overburden, the nature of the underlying deposits will be assessed by hand excavation before any further mechanical excavation that may be required. Thereafter, the trenches will be cleaned by hand to enable the identification and analysis of the archaeological features exposed.
- 8.3.2 Investigation of the features will be undertaken only as far as required to determine their date, form and function. The work will consist of half- or quarter-sectioning of features as required

and, where appropriate, the removal of layers. Should features be located which may be worthy of preservation *in situ*, excavation will be limited to the absolute minimum, (*ie* the minimum disturbance) necessary to interpret the form, function and date of the features.

8.3.3 The archaeological features encountered will be recorded on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma context record sheets. The system used is the single context method by which individual archaeological units of stratigraphy are assigned a unique record number and are individually described and drawn.

8.3.4 Plans of features will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10. Should individual features merit it, they will be drawn at a larger scale.

8.3.5 Throughout the duration of the trial trenching a photographic record consisting of black and white prints (reproduced as contact sheets) and colour slides will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:

- the site before the commencement of field operations.
- the site during work to show specific stages of work, and the layout of the archaeology within individual trenches.
- individual features and, where appropriate, their sections.
- groups of features where their relationship is important.
- the site on completion of field work

8.4 Should human remains be encountered, they will be left *in situ* with excavation being limited to the identification and recording of such remains. If removal of the remains is necessary the appropriate Home Office licences will be obtained and the local environmental health department informed. If relevant, the coroner and the police will be notified.

8.5 Finds collected during the fieldwork will be bagged and labelled according to the individual deposit from which they were recovered ready for later washing and analysis.

8.6 The spoil generated during the investigation will be mounded along the edges of the trial trenches with the top soil being kept separate from the other material excavated for subsequent backfilling.

8.7 The precise location of the trenches within the site and the location of site recording grid will be established by an EDM survey.

## **9 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

9.1 During the investigation specialist advice will be obtained from an environmental archaeologist. If necessary the specialist will visit the site and will prepare a report detailing the nature of the environmental material present on the site and its potential for additional analysis should further stages of archaeological work be required. In particular, the relationship between the roddons plotted from aerial photographs and archaeological remains will be addressed. The results of the specialist's assessment will be incorporated into the final report.

## **10 POST-EXCAVATION AND REPORT**



10.1 Stage 1

10.1.1 On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the trial trenching will be checked and ordered to ensure that they form a uniform sequence constituting a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued: the colour slides will be labelled and mounted on appropriate hangers and the black and white contact prints will be labelled, in both cases the labelling will refer to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.

10.1.2 All finds recovered during the trial trenching will be washed, marked, bagged and labelled according to the individual deposit from which they were recovered. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

10.2 Stage 2

10.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.

10.2.2 Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

11.3 Stage 3

11.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the investigation will be prepared. This will consist of:

- A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
- A description of the archaeological setting of the site.
- Description of the topography and geology of the investigation area.
- Description of the methodologies used during the investigation and discussion of their effectiveness in the light of the results
- A text describing the findings of the investigation.
- Plans of the trenches showing the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
- Sections of the trenches and archaeological features.
- Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed and their context within the surrounding landscape.
- Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
- Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features or groups of features.
- A consideration of the significance of the remains found, in local, regional, national and international terms, using recognised evaluation criteria.

## **11 ARCHIVE**

- 12.1 The documentation, finds, photographs and other records and materials generated during the evaluation will be sorted and ordered in accordance with the procedures in the Society of Museum Archaeologists' document *Transfer of Archaeological Archives to Museums* (1994), and any additional local requirements, for long term storage and curation. This work will be undertaken by the Finds Supervisor, an Archaeological Assistant and the Conservator (if relevant). The archive will be deposited within an approved County store as soon as possible after completion of the post-excavation and analysis.
- 12.2 If required, microfilming of the archive will be carried out at Lincolnshire Archives. The silver master will be transferred to the RCHME and a diazo copy will be deposited with the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Service Historic Environment Record.
- 12.3 Prior to the project commencing, the Cambridgeshire County Archaeological Office will be contacted to obtain their agreement to receipt of the project archive and to establish their requirements with regards to labelling, ordering, storage, conservation and organisation of the archive. The event number for this project issued by the Cambridgeshire Historic Environment Record will be ECB3287.
- 12.4 Upon completion and submission of the evaluation report, the landowner will be contacted to arrange legal transfer of title to the archaeological objects retained during the investigation from themselves to the receiving museum. The transfer of title will be effected by a standard letter supplied to the landowner for signature.

## **13 REPORT DEPOSITION**

- 13.1 An unbound draft copy of the report will be supplied initially to the County Archaeological Office for comment. Copies of the final report will be sent to: the client; the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office (2 copies); and the Cambridgeshire County Historic Environment Record.

## **14 PUBLICATION**

- 14.1 A report of the findings of the investigation will be submitted for inclusion in the appropriate local journal. Notes or articles describing the results of the investigation will also be submitted for publication in the appropriate national journals: *Medieval Archaeology* and *Journal of the Medieval Settlement Research Group* for medieval and later remains, and *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date.
- 14.2 Details of the investigation will also be input to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS).

## **15 CURATORIAL MONITORING**

- 15.1 Curatorial responsibility for the project lies with Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Office. As much notice as possible will be given in writing to the curator prior to the commencement of the project to enable them to make appropriate monitoring arrangements.

## **16 VARIATIONS TO THE PROPOSED SCHEME OF WORKS**

- 16.1 Variations to the scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation from the archaeological curator.

- 16.2 Should the archaeological curator require any additional investigation beyond the scope of the brief for works, or this specification, then the cost and duration of those supplementary examinations will be negotiated between the client and the contractor.

## **17 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT**

- 17.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle and if necessary, be used as subcontractors to provide the relevant specialist work and reports in respect of any objects or material recovered during the investigation that require their expert knowledge and input. Engagement of any particular specialist subcontractor is also dependent on their availability and ability to meet programming requirements.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Body to be undertaking the work</u>
Air Photograph plotting	Roger Palmer, independent specialist
Conservation	Conservation Laboratory, City and County Museum, Lincoln.
Pottery Analysis	Prehistoric: David Knight Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust or Dr Carol Allen, independent specialist. Small assemblages may be reported on by Dale Trimble, Project Manager for APS or by Dr Anne Boyle, the in house pottery specialist at APS. All work by the latter will be mentored by the named specialists.
Roman:	Barbara Precious, independent specialist (formerly City of Lincoln Archaeological Unit), or local specialist if required. APS is currently operating an IFA workplace bursary employing a Alex Beeby who may undertake the work mentored by the named specialist.
Anglo-Saxon:	Dr Anne Boyle, APS in house pottery specialist.
Medieval and later:	Dr Anne Boyle, APS in house pottery specialist.
Other Artefacts	J Cowgill, independent specialist
Human Remains Analysis	R Gowland, independent specialist
Animal Remains Analysis	M . Holmes, independent specialist
Environmental Analysis	Val Fryer, independent specialist
Soil Micromorphology	Dr Charly French, independent specialist
Pollen Assessment	Pat Wiltshire, independent specialist
Radiocarbon dating	Beta Analytic Inc., Florida, USA
Dendrochronology dating	University of Sheffield Dendrochronology Laboratory

## **18 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS**

- 18.1 The Senior Archaeologist, Archaeological Project Services, Tom Lane, MIFA, will have overall responsibility and control of all aspects of the work.
- 18.2 Site work will be undertaken by a Project Officer with experience of archaeological excavations of this type, assisted by 2 appropriately experienced archaeological technicians. The archaeological works are programmed to take 5 days.
- 18.3 Post-excavation report production is expected to take up to 3 working weeks. Post-excavation analysis will be undertaken by the Project Officer, or post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists.
- 18.4 Contingency
- 18.4.1 Contingencies for the analysis of pollen samples, bulk environmental samples, special finds requiring conservation and C14 dating are specified in the project budget.
- 18.4.2 The activation of any contingency requirement will be by agreement with the client and in consultation with the County Archaeology Office.

## **19 INSURANCES**

- 19.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability insurance to £10,000,000. Additionally, the company maintains Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

## **20 COPYRIGHT**

- 20.1 Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.
- 20.2 Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.
- 20.3 In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an infringement under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* and may result in legal action.
- 20.4 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication.

## **21 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Brown N. and Glazebrook, J. (eds) 2000 *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties: 2 Research Agenda and Strategy*. East Anglian Archaeology, Occasional Paper **8**

English Heritage, 1991 *The Management of Archaeological Projects*. London.

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1997 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Excavation*.

Hodge, CAH, Burton, RGO, Corbett, WM, Evans, R, and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales **13**

Greene, R., 1998, *Lans adjoining 80 Wisbech Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. An Archaeological Excavation Interim Report*. Unpublished Archaeological Solutions Report.

Hall, D. N., 1996 The Fenland Project, Number 10: Cambridgeshire Survey, Isle of Ely and Wisbech EAA 79

Lucas, G., 1998 Highfield Farm, Littleport, Cambridgeshire. A Desktop Study CAU Report No 243

Specification: Version 1, 21st October 2009

## Appendix 2

### Wisbech Road, Littleport

#### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Trench	Description	Interpretation
101	1	Hard mid grey stone chippings, 50mm thick	Modern yard surface
102	1	Brick rubble	Modern dumped deposit
103	1	Firm dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.25m thick	Former topsoil
104	1	Firm dark brown clayey silt with occasional lighter brown patches, 0.27m thick	Fill of [106]
105	1	Soft dark brownish grey clayey silt with red mottle	Fill of [106]
106	1	East to West oriented linear, 2.80m wide x 0.78m deep, with a gentle slope at the top becoming steeper and breaking sharply to a flat base	Ditch [106]
107	1	Firm, light, slightly olivey brown clay, 0.26m thick	Alluvial deposit
108	1	Soft dark brown to dark greyish brown silt and peat, 0.19m thick	Organic deposit
109	1	Soft light grey sandy silt with frequent mollusc shell fragments, 0.20m thick	Alluvial deposit
110	1	Soft light grey and yellowish brown sandy silt with red mottle, 0.15m thick	Alluvial deposit
111	1	Mixture of firm light blue clay and light yellowish brown sandy silt	Natural deposit
201	2	50mm thick stone chippings	Modern yard surface
202	2	Brick rubble and modern debris, 0.38m thick	Modern dumped deposit
203	2	Firm dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.22m thick	Former topsoil
204	2	Firm light grey clay with red mottle, 0.18m thick	Alluvial deposit
205	2	Soft, dark brown silt and organic peat, 0.12m thick	Organic deposit
206	2	Soft mid grey silt with frequent mollusc shell fragments, 0.18m thick	Alluvial deposit
207	2	Soft light greyish brown silt, 70mm thick	Alluvial deposit
208	2	Firm, light grey silty clay with red mottle and light yellowish brown patches, 0.10m thick	Alluvial deposit
209	2	Light orangey brown silt	Alluvial deposit
301	3	Hard dark grey rubble and stone chippings	Modern yard surface
302	3	Hard dark brown mixture of silt and rubble	Modern dumped

			deposit
303	3	Firm dark brown clayey silt	Former topsoil
304	3	Firm light brown clay	Alluvial deposit
305	3	Soft yet friable dark brown organic peat deposit	Organic deposit
306	3	Soft yet friable light whitish brown silt	Alluvial deposit
307	3	Firm mid to dark grey clayey silt with occasional charcoal	Alluvial deposit
308	3	Firm bluish grey clay with occasional bands of sand	Natural deposit
401	4	Hard dark grey rubble and stone chippings, 50mm thick	Modern yard surface
402	4	0.45m thick deposit of rubble	Modern levelling deposit
403	4	Firm dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.29m thick	Alluvial deposit
404	4	Firm mid brownish grey clay, 0.14m thick	Alluvial deposit
405	4	Soft dark greyish brown peaty silt, 0.12m thick	Organic deposit
406	4	Soft light grey sandy silt with frequent small shell fragments, 50mm thick	Alluvial deposit
407	4	Soft light bluish grey silt, 0.23m thick	Alluvial deposit
408	4	Mixture of firm bluish grey clay with patches of light yellowish brown sandy silt	Alluvial deposit
501	5	Hard dark grey rubble and stone chippings, 50mm thick	Modern yard surface
502	5	Black rubble deposit, 0.15m thick	Modern levelling deposit
503	5	Firm dark greyish brown clayey silt	Former topsoil
504	5	Firm mid brownish grey clay	Alluvial deposit
505	5	Soft dark greyish brown organic peaty silt	Organic deposit
506	5	Soft light grey sandy silt with frequent small shell fragments	Alluvial deposit
507	5	Light bluish grey clay	Alluvial deposit
508	5	Mixture of firm bluish grey clay with bands of soft light yellowish brown sandy silt	Alluvial deposit
601	6	Firm dark greyish brown clayey silt with occasional small pieces of gravel and sub-angular flints, 0.40m thick	Topsoil
602	6	Firm, somewhat plastic, mid grey silty clay with occasional small sub-angular gravel and flint pieces, 0.30m thick	Subsoil
603	6	Soft, slightly plastic light grey clayey silt with orange patches, occasional charcoal flecks, mollusc shell fragments and small sub-rounded pieces of lint, 0.21m thick	Alluvial deposit
604	6	Firm, yet friable mid reddish grey silty clay with occasional clay patches and small to mid sized	Natural deposit



		sub-angular flints, 0.31m thick	
605	6	Firm slightly plastic mid bluish grey clay with occasional mollusc shell fragments and small sub-rounded pieces of flint	Natural deposit
606	6	Firm dark brown humic silty clay, 0.22m thick	Organic deposit
607	6	Firm to loose light brownish grey silt containing frequent fragments of shell, 0.12m thick	Alluvial deposit
608	6	Firm, slightly friable mid brownish grey clayey silt with yellowish brown mottle and frequent charcoal flecks	Fill of [609]
609	6	Semi-circular/ovoid feature, 1.25m long 0.20m deep with concave sides and base	Circular/ovoid pit cut
701	7	Road surface, 80mm thick	Road surface
702	7	Layer of brick rubble, 0.40m thick	Modern levelling deposit
703	7	Firm dark greyish brown clayey silt, 0.25m thick	Former topsoil deposit
704	7	Firm, yet plastic, mid bluish grey clay, 80 mm thick	Alluvial clay
705	7	Firm, and somewhat plastic, mid dark greyish clayey silt, 0.20m thick	Alluvial deposit
706	7	Firm dark grey clayey silt with about 20% of the deposit consisting of sub-angular to sub-angular burnt stone and flint, up to 0.23m thick	Layer containing a good deal of burnt stone, possibly the edge of a 'burnt mound'
707	7	Firm light grey sandy clayey silt with occasional small sub-angular stones and grit, up to 0.12m thick	Layer at interface between alluvial deposits and natural clays
708	7	Firm light grey clayey sandy silt with occasional small sun-angular and sub-rounded stones, 70mm thick	Layer at interface between alluvial deposits and natural clays
709	7	Firm light yellowish brown clayey sandy silt with occasional grit and small stones at least 0.15m thick	Natural deposit
710	7	Firm light bluish grey clay with occasional light yellowish brown mottle and sub-angular stones, 0.15m thick	Natural clay deposit
711	7	Firm light yellowish brown clayey sandy silt with occasional small sub-angular flints and stones, at least 0.10m thick	Natural clay deposit
712	7	Firm light bluish grey clay with light yellowish brown patches, occasional small sub-angular stones, 0.26m thick	Natural clay

713	7	Firm mid grey silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular flints and stones, 0.13m thick	Alluvial deposit
714	7	Firm light yellowish brown clayey sandy silt, at least 0.16m thick	Natural deposit
715	7	Firm mid grey clayey silt with occasional small sub-angular flints and stones, 0.30m thick x at least 2.0m long	Fill of ditch [716]
716	7	Linear feature 0.60m wide x 0.30m deep, with very steep sides breaking gradually to a fairly flat base	Ditch cut
717	7	Firm and somewhat plastic, mid brownish grey clayey silt up to 0.13m thick	Alluvial deposit
718	7	Firm and somewhat plastic mid grey clayey silt, 0.15m thick	Alluvial deposit
719	7	Firm dark grey clayey silt with about 20% of the deposit consisting of sub-angular to sub-angular burnt stone and flint, up to 0.23m thick	Layer containing a good deal of burnt stone, possibly the edge of a 'burnt mound'
720	7	Firm light bluish grey clay with light yellowish brown mottle containing occasional small sub-angular flints and stones, 0.15m thick	Natural clay
721	7	Firm light Bluish grey silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks and sub-angular and sub-rounded stones, 90mm thick	Possible palaeosol?/Alluvial deposit
722	7	Soft mid red scorched clayey silt, 80mm thick	Fill of [725]
723	7	Soft mid to light grey clayey silt with moderate flecks and small fragments of mid red fires clay, 90mm thick	Fill of [725]
724	7	Soft mid red fired clay and silt, 90mm thick	Fill of [725]
725	7	Ovoid/Keyhole shaped feature, 1.42m long x 0.80m wide with generally quite steep sides braking gradually to a flattish base	Pit cut
726	7	Firm light bluish grey clay with light yellowish brown mottle and occasional small sub-angular stones, at least 0.52m thick	Natural clay deposit

## Appendix 3

**THE FINDS****ROMAN POTTERY***By Alex Beeby***Introduction**

The material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by Darling (2004), Using the codes developed by the City of Lincoln Archaeological unit (Darling and Precious, Forthcoming). A single sherd from a single vessel, weighing 13 grams was recovered from the site.

**Methodology**

The material was laid out and then weighed. The pottery was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1 below.

**Condition**

This sherd is fairly small and has been burnt. The piece has a black deposit adhering to it which may be post depositional sooting, or some sort of organic residue.

**Results***Table 1, Roman Pottery Archive*

Tr	Cxt	Cname	Form	Alter	Dr	Comments	NoS	NoV	W(g)
7	705	VER?	BREED	BURNT; BLACK DEPOSIT +OB	1	RIM; FS	1	1	13
7	705	ZDATE				ML2C			
7	705	ZZZ				SEE GRITTY BUFF FAB STONEA AND FIG 166 NO 154			

**Provenance**

The piece of pottery was recovered from alluvial layer (705) within Trench 7.

**Range**

A single piece of Roman pottery was recovered from LIWR09; this is a rim sherd from Reeded Rim Bowl (BREED). This is of a type with a fairly angular rim and slightly raised internal bead. A very close parallel in both fabric and form is known from the nearby site of Stonea, where this is dated to the mid to late 2nd century AD (see Cameron, 1996, fig 166, 154). The fabric of this piece closely resembles that of Verulamium region white ware (VER) products manufactured in Hertfordshire, though it may well also be a local product. It is a sandy light firing type with orange ferruginous inclusions.

**Potential**

This piece poses no problems for long term storage and should be retained as part of the site archive. The vessel has been chosen for illustration for its intrinsic value.

*Table 2, Illustrated vessels*

Dr	Tr	Cxt	Fabric	Full Name	Cname	Form
01	7	705	VER?	Verulamium Region White Ware?	BREED	Bowl with Reeded Rim

**Summary**

A single piece of Roman pottery dating to the mid to late 2nd century was recovered during the evaluation.

**FIRED CLAY***By Alex Beeby and Anne Boyle*

### Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out by the ACBMG (2001). A total of 17 fragments weighing 195 grams was recovered from the site.

### Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Fragments of fired clay were counted and weighed within each context. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the fired clay is included in Table 3 below.

### Condition

Most of the material comprises small formless flakes and pieces, which lack any form or diagnostic features. Only one piece has an obvious (uneven) surface. One piece, possibly a mould or hearth fragment, is vitrified due to exposure to very high temperatures. Overall the average fragment weight is extremely low at just 11 grams.

### Results

Table 3, Fired Clay Archive

Cxt	Classification	Fabric	Comment	Frag	W(g)
112	FCLAY	Pale oxid; fine; vesicular	Surfaceless; fairly hard fired - CBM?	3	7
606	FCLAY	Oxid; fine sandy; slightly micaceous; +Fe	Surfaceless; formless	1	1
607	FCLAY	Pale oxid; fine sandy; + flint; +Fe	Surfaceless; formless	1	1
724	FCLAY	Reduced; fine	Surfaceless; formless; soft	2	5
724	MISC	Reduced; fine	Surfaceless; formless; burnt clay concretion?	1	4
724	FCLAY	OX/R/OX; fine sandy; rare flint	Surfaceless; V abraded; shaped to object?	6	167
724	FCLAY	Reduced; fine; rare med sand incl	Surfaceless; formless	2	6
724	MOULD?	Reduced; fine	Vitrified; single uneven sanded surface; includes small patch of oxidised unvitrified fine clay; could also be from hearth?	1	4
<b>Total</b>				<b>17</b>	<b>195</b>

### Provenance

Fired clay was recovered from three trenches in total; these were Trenches 1, 6 and 7.

#### Trench 1

Three pieces of fired clay were retrieved as unstratified finds from this trench; they were given context number (112).

#### Trench 6

Two very small pieces of clay were recovered from organic deposit (606) and alluvial deposit (607) within this trench.

#### Trench 7

From Trench 7, Fill (724) within pit [725] produced 12 pieces of fired clay.

### Range

#### Trench 1

The pieces from this trench are hard fired and may be from a single piece of ceramic building material.

#### Trench 6

The fragments from this trench are formless and have no surfaces.

#### Trench 7

There are five unclassified pieces from Trench 7, having no obvious diagnostic features. One of these fragments seems to have an element of mineral concretion mixed in with the clay. Six further fragments appear to have been part of an

object of some kind, but they are far too abraded to be certain of what kind. A single piece within the group is vitrified and may be part of a mould or hearth.

### Potential

The assemblage should be retained as part of the site archive. Some of the material is in poor condition and should be packed accordingly to prevent further decay during storage.

### Summary

A small assemblage of fired clay was recovered from the site. A single feature in Trench 7, [725], produced pieces from an object and material that may be from a mould or hearth lining. None of the material is datable.

## FAUNAL REMAINS

*By Gary Taylor*

### Introduction

A single item (2g) fragments of faunal remains was recovered from stratified contexts.

### Provenance

The mollusc shell was recovered from deposit (606).

### Condition

Although naturally fragile the shell is in good condition.

### Results

*Table 4, Fragments Identified to Taxa*

Cxt	Taxon	Element	Side	Number	W (g)	Comments
606	<i>Planorbis corneus</i>	shell		1	2	complete

### Summary

A single example of ramshorn shell was retrieved. This is a freshwater species that lives in hard water rivers, lakes, canals, etc (McMillan 1973, 110).

## OTHER FINDS

*By Gary Taylor*

### Introduction

One other find weighing 30g was recovered.

### Condition

The item is in good, archive-stable condition.

### Results

*Table 5, Other Materials*

Cxt	Material	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
112	stone	Burnt stone	1	30	

### Provenance

The other find was retrieved from unstratified context (112)

### Range

A single burnt stone was recovered.

### Potential

The other finds is of limited potential

**SPOT DATING**

The dating in Table 6 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 6, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments
705	Mid to Late 2nd Century	Date on a single sherd

**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
BS	Body sherd
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
LHJ	Lower Handle Join
NoF	Number of Fragments
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
PCRG	Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group
TR	Trench
UHJ	Upper Handle Join
W (g)	Weight (grams)

**REFERENCES**

- ~ 2001, *Draft Minimum Standards for the Recovery, Analysis and Publication of Ceramic Building Material*, third version [internet]. Available from <<http://www.geocities.com/acbmg1/CBMGDE3.htm>>
- ~ 2003, *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* [internet]. Available at <<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/section.asp?catId=3155>>
- Cameron, F., 1996, Other Roman Pottery, In: Jackson, R.P.J. and Potter, T.W., 1996, *Excavations at Stonea, Cambridgeshire, 1980-85* (London)
- Darling, M. J., 2004, 'Guidelines for the Archiving of Roman Pottery', *Journal of Roman Pottery Studies* 11, 67-74
- McMillan, N. F., 1973 *British Shells* (London)
- Slowikowski, A. M., Nenck, B., and Pearce, J., 2001, *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Medieval Pottery Research Group Occasional Paper 2
- Young, J., Vince, A.G. and Nailor, V., 2005, *A Corpus of Saxon and Medieval Pottery from Lincoln* (Oxford)

## APPENDIX 4

### The Environmental Data

#### Wisbech Road, Littleport – LIWR09

Evaluation trenches at Wisbech Road, Littleport uncovered a series of natural deposits and some archaeological features. Five samples collected from the excavations were processed in house by APS and the flots and some of the finds from the sorted residues were submitted to the Environmental Archaeology Consultancy for assessment.

Samples 1 and 2 derive from alluvial sandy silts and silts in Trenches 1 and 3 at the north end of the site. The remaining three samples, 5, 6 and 7, were collected from two layers containing up to 20% burnt stone and the fill of an ovoid/keyhole shaped feature all in Trench 7 at the southern end of the site. The two sampled layers (706 and 719) with burnt stone are provisionally interpreted as representing the edge of 'burnt mound' features. There is at present no secure dating evidence for any of these deposits.

The flots and sorts supplied have been preliminarily identified (Table 1) and assessed for further study.

The two samples from trenches 1 and 3 both produced abundant snails which included only aquatic taxa (Table 1). Several of these taxa suggest larger bodies of water or running water (Macan 1969), but one or two can be found in drainage ditches and marshes. Taxa more typical of flowing river environments are absent, but in a fen context most rivers were not fast moving and these two trenches are likely to be on the margins of any water bodies or river channels running across the site. The snail fauna could easily have occupied a channel edge environment or a former river channel cut off by a change in course, or perhaps an area of open water on the edge of the fen. It may be that these silts occupied a former course of the River Ouse but more field work would be needed to prove this. A more detailed study of the snails and the uncharred plant remains could refine this interpretation somewhat, but without a radiocarbon date for the deposits such study would not be justified. Both samples produced a little charcoal perhaps suggesting some archaeological activity nearby.

In Trench 7 two samples were collected from layers described as possibly the edge of a burnt mound. Both these samples, as described in the field, produced fire-cracked and burnt stone, flint and river pebbles, although without knowledge of the sample size, whether they comprise 20% of the sediment as described in the field or not is not known. The presence of small flakes of unburnt flint, probably debitage, a small assemblage of animal bone – including a sheep/goat tooth fragment, small charcoal assemblages and a little fired earth in addition to the burnt stone clearly indicates an archaeological presence, although whether a burnt mound or not is more problematic. Burnt mound deposits that this organisation has processed have generally been devoid of flint debitage and animal bone, and their presence in this trench might suggest proximity to an occupation site, although this need not rule out a burnt mound deposit as well. The sample from context 723 in the same trench apparently lacks any burnt stone, although a little 'clinker', fired earth and magnetised small stones indicates, with a little charcoal, some fire debris in the deposit infilling the ovoid feature. The charcoal from samples 5 and 7 includes several pieces that would be identifiable, although much of it is small comminuted fragments.



Whether the burnt stone derives from a typical 'burnt mound site' or from cooking activities at an occupation site, the site seems likely to be prehistoric in date. Despite the absence of small roundwood or twig charcoal in either of these samples, 5 and 7, charcoal from either sample could be used to obtain a date that should be adequate for assigning an age to the site.

**Table 1. Finds from the flots and sorts submitted for assessment.**

Sample	context	flint no.	fire-cracked stone	fired earth *	char-coal */\$	charred seed	unchar'd seed *	snails */#	bone *	
1	109				2/2		1	5/3	1	watervole, fish tooth, <i>Bithynia tentaculata</i> , <i>B. leachii</i> , <i>Lymnaea peregra</i> , <i>Valvata piscinalis</i> , <i>V. macrostoma</i> , <i>Anisus leucostoma</i> , <i>Planorbis planorbis</i> , <i>P. contortus</i> , <i>P. laevis</i> , <i>P.albus</i> , <i>Segmentina nitida</i>
2	306				2/2		4	5/3		<i>Bithynia tentaculata</i> , <i>B. leachii</i> , <i>Lymnaea peregra</i> , <i>Lymnaea glabra</i> , <i>Valvata piscinalis</i> , <i>V. macrostoma</i> , <i>Anisus leucostoma</i> , <i>Planorbis planorbis</i> , <i>P. contortus</i> , <i>P. laevis</i> , <i>P.albus</i> , <i>Segmentina nitida</i> , <i>Pisidium</i> sp.
5	706	8	Yes	1	3/3					Abundant fire-cracked stone and burnt flint and river pebbles; probable flint debitage and a small piece of fired earth
6	719	7	Yes		2/4				2	Abundant fore-cracked and burnt stone and flint; small flint flakes possibly represent debitage; Sheep/goat tooth enamel and indeterminate bone.
7	723			1	2/1					A little clinker and a few pieces of fired earth

\* frequency – 1=1-10; 2=11-50; 3=51-150; 4=151-250; 5=>250 items;

\*/\$ frequency - charcoal >2mm/<2mm;

# species diversity – 1= 1-3, 2= 4-10, 3= 11-25, 4= 26-50, 5=>50 species.

## **Recommendations**

If the deposits in Trenches 1, 3 and 7 remain undated it is difficult to justify any further study of these samples since without a chronological context any results would be of limited value. The waterlain deposits in Trenches 1 and 3 could reflect a former river channel, but this could not be ascertained through further study of the samples, but would require more fieldwork. Clearly the northern part of the site lies over a former water body, but further study of the material from the samples would not advance the interpretation significantly. It may however be of some interest to know when this area was a water body. This could be established by radiocarbon dating the operculae of the *Bithynia tentaculata* shells or selected and identified elements of the uncharred plant seeds. A field evaluation of these deposits and a hand auger survey may have been more effective in interpreting the character and origin of the deposits in this area. The charcoal in the samples could potentially have derived from the archaeological activity recorded in Trench 7, something that could be confirmed if dates from both areas are obtained.

Apart from the charcoal there are no environmental finds from the samples from Trench 7 that would permit any further work. Study of this charcoal would have little value if the site is undated, although its study to select the best samples for radiocarbon dating may well be warranted. Depending upon any date that was obtained it could be argued that further investigation of this 'burnt mound' or occupation site was justified. The burnt stone could well have been heating water obtained from the water body indicated by the samples in Trenches 1 and 3.

## **References**

Macan, T.T. 1969 *A key to the British Fresh- and Brackish-water Gastropods*. Freshwater Biological Association, Sc. Publication No. 13.

James Rackham  
Environmental Archaeology Consultancy

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2009

## Appendix 5

### GLOSSARY

<b>Alluvium</b>	Deposits laid down by water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea, and fresh water alluvium is laid down by rivers and in lakes.
<b>Anglo-Saxon</b>	Pertaining to the period when Britain was occupied by peoples from northern Germany, Denmark and adjacent areas. The period dates from approximately AD 450-1066.
<b>Bronze Age</b>	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
<b>Context</b>	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, e.g. [004].
<b>Cropmark</b>	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological or geological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
<b>Cut</b>	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, etc. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
<b>Domesday Survey</b>	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
<b>Fill</b>	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
<b>Iron Age</b>	A period characterised by the introduction of Iron into the country for tools, between 800 BC and AD 50.
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term used to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Mesolithic</b>	The 'Middle Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 11000 - 4500 BC.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
<b>Neolithic</b>	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500 - 2250 BC.
<b>Post hole</b>	The hole cut to take a timber post, usually in an upright position. The hole may have been dug larger than the post and contain soil or stones to support the post. Alternatively, the posthole may have been formed through the

process of driving the post into the ground.

<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
<b>Prehistoric</b>	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
<b>Ridge and Furrow</b>	The remains of arable cultivation consisting of raised rounded strips separated by furrows. It is characteristic of open field agriculture.
<b>Roddon</b>	Raised banks of clay or silt representing sinuous channels which formed dendritic patterns and which later became silted up. Roddons stand proud of the fen surface due to tidal levees and also due to post depositional compression and wastage of the surrounding peat.
<b>Romano-British</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
<b>Saxon</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany
<b>Till</b>	A deposit formed after the retreat of a glacier. Also known as boulder clay, this material is generally unsorted and can comprise of rock flour to boulders to rocks of quite substantial size.

## Appendix 6

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

46	Context records
2	Photographic record sheet
1	Section record sheet
1	Plan record sheet
5	Daily record sheet
4	Trench Sheets
23	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services  
The Old School  
Cameron Street  
Heckington  
Sleaford  
Lincolnshire  
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Cambridgeshire County Council  
Castle Court  
Shire Hall  
Cambridgeshire  
CB3 0AP

Accession Number: ECB3287

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: LIWR09

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.